AL GORE'S DISMAYING SPEECH ON IRAQ The Editors

THE NEW REPUBLIC

GREEKS, NEW AND OLD
James Wood, Peter Green

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WHY NUKES ARE THE ONLY WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION
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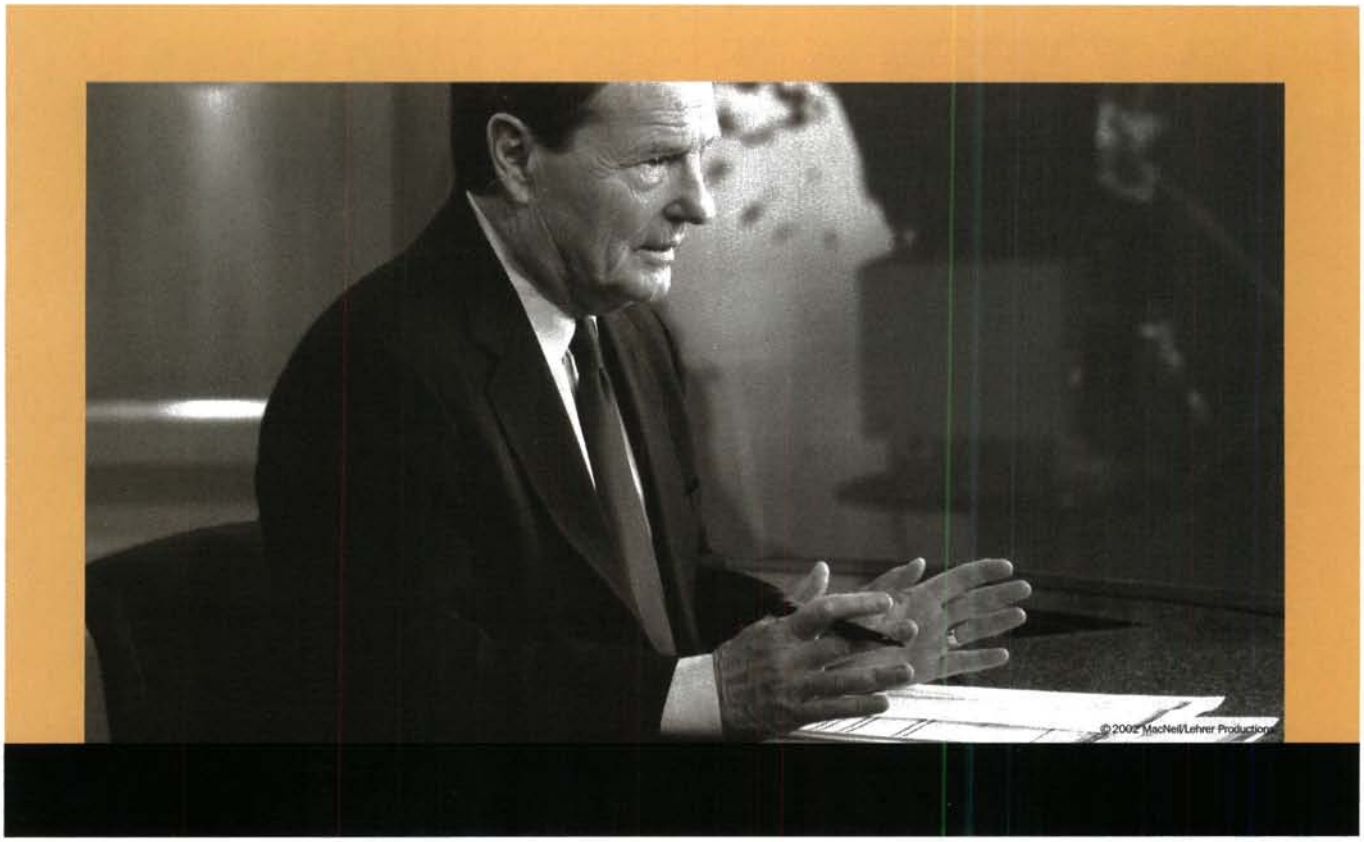

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Solid state

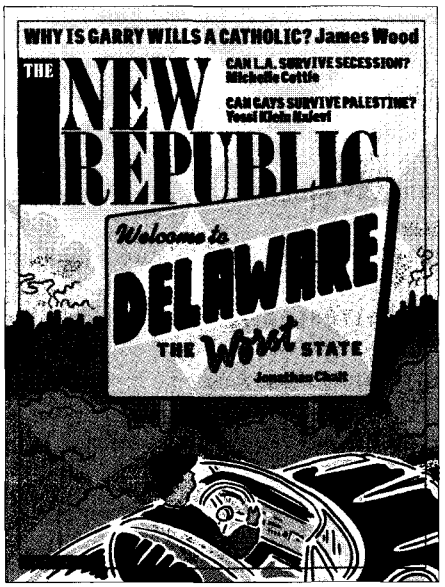
TO THE EDITORS:

Jonathan Chait wrote a scathing attack on Delaware, calling it a rogue state where the "organizing principle of Delaware government is to subsidize its people at the rest of the country's expense" ("Rogue State," August 19 & 26). Not only were his facts mostly inaccurate, but he also ignored the fact that Delaware's approach to government actually improves people's lives. Delaware's economic success has been the result of its ability to act as a "laboratory of democracy," in the words of former Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, by trying experiments with new solutions to economic questions.

During the recession of the early '80s Delaware lowered personal taxes, which resulted in enhanced economic and business activity. Delaware's interest-rate laws created new jobs and provided more credit for consumers. Corporations seek a location where shareholder value is placed in high esteem, and they choose Delaware because of its body of case law and fair treatment of corporate disputes. When the growth of state-government spending put Delaware into technical bankruptcy, Delaware established a Budgetary Reserve Fund and a constitutional requirement for extra-majority voting on legislation to raise taxes in the General Assembly.

The economic success that followed has continued to flow to its residents. Over the past ten years employment has increased 23 percent, compared with 12 percent in the region (Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania); our unemployment rate is 3.9 percent, compared with the national rate of 5.7 percent. Job opportunities in financial services have increased 60 percent in the past ten years, compared with 5 percent in the region and 15 percent nationally. Personal income has grown 84 percent, compared with 60 percent in the region and 78 percent nationally. And population has increased 17 percent, compared with 10 percent in the region and 11 percent nationally. Delaware's gross state product per capita ranks third highest in the United States, and the state carries a AAA bond rating by both major bond-rating services.

As to the errors in Chait's diatribe: 1) Delaware does have a gasoline tax—gas is 23 cents per gallon, the fourteenth highest in the country; 2) Delaware's corporate fees are quite low—Chait, in citing incorporating fees, probably meant our franchise taxes, which account for 18


WHY IS GARRY WILLS A CATHOLIC? James Wood
THE NEW REPUBLIC
CAN L.A. SURVIVE SECESSION? Michelle Cottle
CAN GAYS SURVIVE PALESTINE? Yossi Klein Halevi
Welcome to DELAWARE
THE Worst STATE

percent (not 25 percent) of the state's operating revenue; 3) tolls in Delaware finance 3 percent (not 6 percent) of the state's operating budget; and 4) the Financial Center Development Act (1981) stimulated the growth of the banking industry in Delaware precisely by offering tax rates that encourage those institutions to grow by reducing the marginal rate to 1.7 percent on taxable income in excess of $650 million, actually providing more tax revenue to fund other important programs.

So our little laboratory of democracy has resulted in an economic success story copied by many other states, and we're sorry Chait did not see that the fruits of that success actually help its citizens.

MICHAEL N. CASTLE
U.S. Representative
Washington, D.C.
ELEANOR D. CRAIG
Professor of Economics
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware

TO THE EDITORS:

I have been a faithful reader of THE NEW REPUBLIC since my freshman year in college, but Chait's article obliges me to profess my greater loyalty for my adopted state, Delaware, and its corporate law. Chait colorfully argues that Delaware has led a "race to the bottom" in national corporate governance. That thesis—conventional wisdom a generation ago—was demolished by subsequent scholarship. It is now widely accepted that Delaware dominates the market for incorporations and reincorporations because firms take advantage of Delaware's breadth of case law, specialized Court of Chancery, skilled judges, efficient government employees, and well-honed corporate statutes. Some scholars have observed that Delaware corporations are more valuable than non-Delaware corporations, and a debate has arisen over whether that is attributable to the value of Delaware law or because Delaware undercharges corporations for the benefits of using its legal infrastructure. Imagine that: Delaware may be subsidizing stockholders around the globe to induce incorporations in Delaware.

Scholarship aside, Chait is simply wrong in asserting that Delaware law and courts "are the most pro-management in the nation." Over the last two decades Delaware judges have issued path-breaking decisions, striking down egregious takeover defenses, protecting stockholder voting rights, and imposing stringent duties upon directors when they put a corporation up for sale. The day Chait's article arrived on my doorstep the Delaware Supreme Court enjoined a recapitalization of The Reader's Digest Association. Had Chait wandered past the Delaware History Museum and observed a hearing in the Delaware Court of Chancery, he would have seen how corporate disputes are resolved with intelligence and care.

JOEL FRIEDLANDER
Wilmington, Delaware

JONATHAN CHAIT REPLIES:

My article argued not that Delaware was impoverishing its citizens but rather that it was enriching them at the expense of other states. Evidence of Delaware's relative prosperity merely bolsters my case. Castle and Craig accuse me of four errors. The first is legitimate, and TNR corrected it weeks ago. The rest are bogus. "Errors" number two and three are semantic games. With regard to the former, I wrote that Delaware's incorporation fees, "along with some associated revenues, account for a whopping one-quarter of total state revenues." Castle and Craig simply pretend the associated revenues don't exist. As for the latter, I referred to tolls as a portion of the total budget, while they refer to an "operating budget," which excludes many transportation revenues. "Error" number four is a non sequitur—it does not contradict anything I wrote. Friedlander, for his part, merely takes a different, more conservative, view of Delaware corporate law; his view has hardly "demolished" mine. A 2000 GAO report discovered that the Russian mob took advantage of lax Delaware law to launder money there. A 2002 study of Delaware bankruptcies by a UCLA law

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professor found empirical evidence of a "race to the bottom."

Married life

TO THE EDITORS:

The August 19 & 26 issue of TNR refers to a recent article written in *The New York Times* regarding close relatives of congressional leaders who lobby, including myself ("Notebook").

As you pointed out, my career in the aviation industry, within both the public and private sectors, has spanned more than 25 years and predated my marriage to Tom Daschle. I am proud of what I do and what I have accomplished. I recognize, however, that my husband's career requires me to take steps to avoid a conflict of interest, and I take that requirement seriously. I have never lobbied my husband, his staff, or his committees. In fact, I've recused myself from lobbying the entire Senate. You may think my self-imposed restraints are inadequate, but they go above and beyond ethics rules.

I do regret how my remark regarding congressional staffers was reported. As I made clear to the reporter, when I began lobbying on behalf of my aviation clients, my husband was in the House of Representatives, sitting on the Agriculture Committee. He was not exactly a household name. That has obviously changed. But I do take exception to your reference that somehow I am retained only because of whom I am married to and, even worse, that I should quit my job because of his. Surely your magazine has a more progressive outlook.

LINDA DASCHLE
Washington, D.C.

Nuclear apology

TO THE EDITORS:

Michael Crowley has made Senator Richard Lugar the envy of all his colleagues in the Senate—past and present—not to mention every other elected official ever wrongly characterized by a journalist ("Sorry" August 19 & 26). Crowley's Washington Diarist was a rare and courageous piece wherein he apologized to Lugar for not having realized sooner that Lugar "knew the issues better than anyone else did" and that "he's probably worked harder than anyone else in Congress to protect us" from nuclear weapons.

I first became acquainted with then-Indianapolis Mayor Lugar when he sought to unseat me in the 1974 Senate election. Later I was privileged to be his colleague and serve with him on the Senate Intelligence Committee. As chairman of that committee, at a time when we were examining the Soviet Union's nuclear and missile capacity (where each warhead was located), I chose only four other members with whom to share and guard our most secret intelligence. Senator Lugar was an easy choice. Then, as now, Lugar always puts our national interest above any personal or political agenda. To quote Crowley, "Bless him."

BIRCH BAYH
Washington, D.C.

Untouchable

TO THE EDITORS:

Spencer Ackerman's article and the House-passed bill to create the Department of Homeland Security (DOHS) are two ships that passed in the night ("Home Office," August 19 & 26). It seems to me that the concerns Ackerman raised were satisfied exactly as Bill Bransford proposed in the same article: "If they do intend to [keep] SES [Senior Executive Service] in the Department of Homeland Security as it exists in current law, why don't they just put it [in the bill] as one of those things that can't be touched?"

That's exactly what we did in the House of Representatives. An amendment I offered to the bill, during markup by the Select Committee on Homeland Security, explicitly carves out of the secretary's new management flexibility the provisions of federal civil service law (U.S. Code Title 5) that directly reference the SES. If we left anything out, I would hope we would have heard directly from the Senior Executives Association before the bill went to the floor and was open to further amendment.

Some of the most talented and dedicated people moving over to DOHS are in the elite status of SES. We need to retain them, and our bill goes out of the way to do just that.

ROB PORTMAN
U.S. Representative
Washington, D.C.

SPENCER ACKERMAN REPLIES:

The real two ships passing in the night are Representative Portman's offered language and the final version of H.R. 5005 as passed by the full House. Section 9701 governing the human resources management system of the DOHS carves out no exception for the SES from the president's "flexibility" structure. ■

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Crude

ANTIWAR LIBERALS say America shouldn't attack Iraq because the world doesn't want us to. Antiwar realists say America shouldn't attack Iraq because it will destabilize the Middle East. Antiwar isolationists say America shouldn't attack Iraq because it is hasn't attacked us. And in the mainstream press, these critiques get most of the attention. But venture a little further out on the ideological grid, and the critique becomes more cynical. Antiwar leftists say America shouldn't attack Iraq because American foreign policy shouldn't be dictated by oil.

While the "this war is really about oil" thesis may be marginal in Washington, it's pervasive beyond America's shores. And American hawks haven't spent much time refuting it. At its most sophisticated, the thesis goes something like this: After Saudi Arabia, Iraq has the world's second-largest proven oil reserves. For most of the last eleven years, Iraq has been exporting far less oil than it did before the Gulf war. And the oil it has been pumping has largely been in conjunction with Russian, French, and Italian oil companies—not with American ones. American oil companies want to change that and make the big bucks that could accompany intensive development of Iraq's largely untapped oil fields. What's more, the United States could force a pliant post-Saddam Hussein regime to spurn OPEC's production quotas and flood the market with cheap crude. That would boost the U.S. economy, potentially wreck the international cartel that keeps oil relatively expensive, and reduce U.S. dependence on a Saudi Arabian monarchy the American right no longer trusts.

It's a seductive thesis—especially if you're inclined to believe the worst about the former oilmen who currently occupy the White House. But it has a few problems. First, many of the same leftists who say America is going to war to ensure cheap oil also warn that war with Iraq could wreck the U.S. economy by sending oil prices sky-high. At a press conference recently convened by antiwar Representative Dennis Kucinich, Miriam Pemberton of the dovish Institute for Policy Studies warned that if America attacks Iraq, "Wall Street analysts estimate that oil prices could rise to as much as fifty dollars a barrel, which would affect all business activities in the United States." Pemberton is right about Wall Street's fears. Last week, when Saddam agreed to let weapons inspectors return, raising hopes that war might be averted, the price of oil dropped. In other words, it's not the prospect of war with Saddam that drives oil prices down; it's the prospect of *not going* to war.

That may be accurate in the short term, acknowledge oil conspiracy theorists, but in the longer term—once the United States has replaced Saddam with a puppet government—the price of oil will plummet. And it's true that a post-Saddam regime could substantially increase production. Before the Gulf war, Iraq produced as much as 3.5 million barrels of oil per day. Some analysts think that with significant foreign investment, Iraq might eventually manage six million barrels—enough to substantially lessen American dependence on Saudi Arabia and perhaps even destroy OPEC, which keeps oil prices artificially high.

But this just raises another logical problem: If all the Bush administration wanted from Iraq were those six million daily barrels of crude—if all its talk about nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons was merely a smoke screen—why wouldn't the United States simply lift sanctions? Attacking Saddam, after all, entails huge financial costs, risks American lives, and could prompt civil war in precisely those parts of Iraq where oil companies want to drill. Lifting sanctions would far more easily produce the same result—since it is sanctions that have partially prevented Iraq from importing the equipment that it needs to boost oil production. Saddam has made it clear that he'd love to pump more oil—if the world would let him use the revenue to buy palaces and Scuds. In 1995, for instance, Baghdad announced that if sanctions were lifted it would enter into agreements with foreign oil companies aimed at boosting production to between six and seven million barrels per day—roughly the same amount analysts envision under a post-Saddam regime.

And while Russian, French, and Italian oil companies would have the inside track in cutting deals with Saddam if sanctions fell, that's largely because Washington's anti-Saddam hard-line has kept American oil companies from investing in Iraq. Saddam's government, for its part, has said it would be perfectly happy to partner with American oil companies. And even under sanctions, it has knowingly sold substantial quantities of oil—through middlemen—to U.S. energy behemoths like ChevronTexaco and Valero.

In fact, it isn't war that the American oil industry has been lobbying for all these years; it's the end of sanctions. As late as October 2001, after Bush administration hawks had already begun talking about war with Iraq, the American Petroleum Institute was still focused on trying to lift sanctions. In an interview with *Energy Day*, an institute spokesman criticized "the roadblocks of U.S. law that unilaterally close important markets to U.S. companies while leaving the door wide open for competitors." Antiwar lefties are quick to cite Vice President Dick Cheney's tenure at Halliburton as evidence that the oil industry is behind America's rush to war. But when Cheney ran Halliburton, he wasn't calling for an invasion of Iraq; and, while for personal reasons more supportive of Iraqi sanctions than most, he nonetheless railed against the sanctions that America imposed everywhere in the Middle East.

Indeed, for their first nine months in office, Cheney and the Bush team didn't propose invading Iraq; they proposed scaling back the U.N. sanctions regime. The Bush administration changed its mind not because of oil but because of terrorism. September 11 made the terrorist threat a reality, and the more American policymakers began worrying about that threat, the more they began worrying about the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons—which seems to be how they arrived at war with Iraq.

If the timing of this potential war doesn't fit the oil thesis, neither does the diplomatic maneuvering going on around it. If oil were the Bush administration's top priority, it wouldn't be promising to protect Russia's and France's oil interests in a post-Saddam Iraq in exchange for their votes at the Security Council (see "Asking Price," by Asla Aydintasbas, page 12). If oil was what the Bush team wanted most, it would be *encouraging* Paris and Moscow to oppose the war, thus clearing the field for U.S. oil companies once Saddam fell.

Whatever you think of the Bushies, September 11, 2001, changed their view of the world. And it is that changed view that has brought America to the brink of war. The left can call that new outlook reckless or arrogant or dumb. But they should at least admit that it's sincere.

PETER BEINART

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Speechless

IN THE 1980s and 1990s, Al Gore consistently battled the irresponsibility and incoherence on foreign affairs that plagued the Democratic Party. And it was partly out of admiration for that difficult and principled work that this magazine twice endorsed him for president. Unfortunately, that Al Gore didn't show up at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco on Monday. Instead, the former vice president's speech almost perfectly encapsulated the evasions that have characterized the Democratic Party's response to President Bush's proposed war in Iraq. In typical Democratic style, Gore didn't say he opposed the war. In fact, he endorsed the goal of regime change—before presenting a series of qualifications that would likely make that goal impossible.

First, Gore said that war with Iraq would undermine America's primary mission: fighting terrorism. This mission, he explained, requires ongoing international cooperation. And he suggested that "our ability to secure this kind of cooperation can be severely damaged by unilateral action against Iraq. If the administration has reason to believe otherwise, it ought to share those reasons with the Congress." But surely Gore also has an obligation to share his reasons for believing that war with Iraq *will* "severely damage" the war on terrorism. The argument, after all, is not self-evident: Germany, the U.S. ally most vocally opposed to attacking Iraq, has simultaneously *intensified* its assistance in the war on terrorism—signaling that it will take over the international peacekeeping force in Afghanistan. In fact, Gore provides no evidence to support his claim. And thus he fails the very evidentiary standard that he calls on Bush to meet.

Gore's second complaint concerns the timing of the administration's push on Iraq. "President George H.W. Bush," Gore noted approvingly, "purposely waited until after the midterm elections of 1990 to push for a vote. ... President George W. Bush, by contrast, is pushing for a vote in this Congress immediately before the election." But as we argued two weeks ago, it is far better, in a democracy, for legislators to vote on critical issues before an election—so citizens know where they stand when they go to the polls—than to delay such votes until after an election and thus shield legislators from accountability for their views. Gore went on to pronounce "a burden on the shoulders of President Bush to dispel the doubts many have expressed about the role that politics might be playing in the calculations of some in the administration," before adding, "I have not raised those doubts, but many have." But, of course, that is exactly what Gore was doing. And he should have taken responsibility for raising those doubts himself.

Gore's final critique of the administration's preparations for war is that they are proceeding without sufficient regard to international opinion. "[I]n the immediate aftermath of September Eleventh," Gore said, "we had an enormous reservoir of goodwill and sympathy and shared resolve all over the world. That has been squandered in a year's time and replaced with great anxiety all around the world, not primarily about what the terrorist networks are going to do but about what we're going to do." But this ignores the fact that there is not now, nor will there likely be in the foreseeable future, broad international support for regime change in Baghdad. The two honest ways to resolve this problem are to privilege regime change above international consensus—while trying, as the Bush administration has, to pressure and cajole as many allies as possible to go along—or to forego regime change in the name of solidarity without our allies. Instead, Gore swore fealty to both regime change and international consensus, while refusing to acknowledge the conflict between the two. The closest he came was a suggestion that "if the [Security] Council will not provide such language [authorizing force], then other choices remain open." But would Gore support those "other choices," i.e., war? From his San Francisco speech, you wouldn't know.

Gore deserves credit for criticizing the administration's disturbing vagueness about its plans for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq and for grappling with Bush's theory of preemption—something other Democrats have been reluctant to do. Still, his speech—which included, as a two-sentence aside, the charge that on the domestic front the administration was conducting an "attack on fundamental constitutional rights"—consisted of neither honest criticism nor honest opposition. Rather, it sounded like a political broadside against a president who Gore no doubt feels occupies a post that he himself deserves. But bitterness is not a policy position. In past moments of foreign policy decision—first the Gulf war, then Bosnia—Al Gore has championed the moral and strategic necessity of American power and thus offered a model for his party. We wish we could say that at this moment of decision he was doing the same. ■

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N O T E B O O K

HARVARD AND THE JEWISH QUESTION: Decency is a matter of making morality obvious, platitudinous, a society's second nature. When the legitimacy of prejudice is still a subject for controversy, something profound is awry. This was the point that Lawrence H. Summers, the president of Harvard, rightly made in a brief and extraordinary sermon that he delivered on September 17 before morning prayers in Harvard's Memorial Church. His theme was anti-Semitism and its recent resurgence. It is, he said, "a subject that I never thought I would become seriously worried about." Indeed, "it would have been inconceivable only a generation or two ago that Harvard could have a Jewish president," Harvard's Jewish president observed. But he confessed that his confidence in the delegitimation of Jew-hatred in Western life has been shaken by various anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, and by the revival of an anti-Zionism so virulent that in many cases it cannot be meaningfully distinguished from anti-Semitism. Summers took pains to clarify that he himself does not believe that there is no difference between a criticism of Israel and a bias against Jews: "[C]ertainly there is much to be debated about the Middle East and much in Israel's foreign and defense policy that can be and should be vigorously criticized." Those are not exactly the words of an ethnic apologist. But Summers proceeded to maintain that the boycotting of Israeli scholars, and the comparison of Ariel Sharon to Adolf Hitler, and the campaign in some American universities, including Harvard, "to single out Israel among all nations as the lone country where it is inappropriate for any part of the university's endowment to be invested" are not to be mistaken for a mere difference of opinion with the Sharon government—that these measures and notions cross the line into a pure and indefensible hostility, and also transgress the ideal of academic freedom. It seemed so obvious, and therefore so decent. But then something astounding happened. The president of Harvard's condemnation of anti-Semitism became a subject of controversy at Harvard! Summers's careful distinctions, and his warning about the pitfalls of prejudice, proved to be not at all obvious. Almost as if to prove Summers correct in his assertion that "serious and thoughtful people are advocating and taking actions that are anti-Semitic in their effect if not their intent," various professors expressed their resentment at Summers's statement. "We are essentially being told there can be no debate," said an assistant professor of neurobiology. "This is the ugliest statement imaginable to paint critics as anti-Semitic." Never mind that Summers said precisely the opposite. (An imprecise neurobiologist is a dangerous man.) Why would anybody who is not anti-Semitic recoil from a speech against anti-Semitism? The historian John Womack, who signed the petition for divestment at Harvard, condescendingly remarked that "people see all sorts of things where they don't exist: Children see ghosts and goblins under their bed, grownups see enemies where there aren't any." It never occurred to the long-in-the-tooth Zapatista that his words perfectly described Summers's critics, and also some of Israel's critics. Would a controversy have ensued if the president of Harvard had insisted upon a distinction, say, between racism and the criticism of affirmative action? But at Harvard the question of anti-Semitism is suddenly a question with two sides. There are imbecilities that are possible only at the finest universities. If this is what now passes for progressive thinking in America, then the right in America has nothing to worry about.

SECOND OPINION: "2 STUDIES FIND NO ADVANTAGE TO PROSTATE SURGERY"—*Boston Globe* headline, September 12

"PROSTATE CANCER SURGERY FOUND TO CUT DEATH RISK"—*New York Times* headline, same day

THE TAMEST MAVERICK: As a highly vulnerable incumbent in a Democratic-leaning Maryland district, Representative Connie Morella is trying hard to cast herself as a nonpartisan woman of principle. Morella is "the most independent voice in Congress," proclaims her latest campaign ad, in which Morella explains her noble philosophy: "You judge each issue on its merits, you listen to your constituency, you put partisanship aside, and you do what you think is right." How inspiring. Unfortunately, this line was easier to believe the last time around. As a candidate in 2000, Morella repeatedly criticized the Bush tax cut, which she described as "too big." Indeed, as late as January 2001, she was still urging the president to drop the spectacularly ill-advised, partisan, and, in her district, unpopular tax cut. But when the time came to vote on the legislation, and the House leadership began twisting arms, the Most Independent Voice in Congress fell in line as dutifully as a freshman Mississippi conservative. Now Morella's vote for the Bush cut has helped to make a disaster of the federal budget—and to make her other priorities, such as a prescription-drug benefit, unaffordable. If this is what she calls independence, we'd hate to see her idea of partisanship.

MAYBE MEN ARE BUYING IT? "ABORTION PILL SALES RISING, FIRM SAYS"—*Washington Post* headline, September 25

"ABORTION PILL SLOW TO WIN USERS AMONG WOMEN AND THEIR DOCTORS"—*New York Times* headline, same day (Thanks to Geoffrey Farrell Reed.)

THE ORIGINAL KING OF COMEDY: Jesse Jackson spent most of this year laying relatively low to let the furor over last year's revelations of his adultery fade from memory. But now the master of the mau-mau is back. This time, he's launched a crusade against the rapper Ice Cube's new film,

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Barbershop. It's an unlikely Jackson target: The film is a paean to self-sufficiency and bourgeois value, in which Ice Cube—onetime member of the "gangsta rap" group Niggaz With Attitude—plays a ghetto barbershop owner struggling to stay in business. Jackson, however, seems to have missed the movie's social message because he was so upset with its jokes about the sacred cows of the civil rights movement. In addition to cracking wise about Martin Luther King Jr.'s alleged infidelity, Eddie (Ice Cube's crusty colleague, played by Cedric the Entertainer) delivers a hilarious monologue imploring that "black people need to stop lying." They need to acknowledge that "Rodney King should have got his ass beat" and "Rosa Parks ain't do nothin' but sit her black ass down." Upon reading *Barbershop*'s script—Jackson admits that he hasn't seen the picture—the three-time presidential candidate waxed indignant to the *Los Angeles Times*, "You would not make Golda Meir the butt of a joke—it's sacred territory." Jackson's dressing down had the predictable effect: The film's producers, Bob Teitel and George Tillman, issued a profuse apology. Even their groveling, however, wasn't enough to placate Jackson. In an interview with the Associated Press, he subsequently demanded the jokes be cut from the film's video, DVD, and "future releases." Lost in all Jackson's huffing, however, has been any discussion of the punch line to Eddie's tirade. When one of the barbershop's charming eccentrics gasps, "You better not let Jesse Jackson hear you talk like that." Eddie replies, "Fuck Jesse Jackson!" In other words, this is just another episode of Jackson dipping himself in King's blood, using the banner of the civil rights movement to promote his own interests. There is, however, at least one salutary side effect of *l'affaire Barbershop*: It's keeping Jackson too busy for any peace missions to Baghdad.

HOLIDAY SPIRIT: At the University of Colorado, Boulder, this past weekend, swastikas were daubed on a temporary wooden structure built so Jewish students might observe at meals the harvest festival of Sukkot in a proper sukkah, or tabernacle, its roof decorated with vegetation but otherwise open to the skies. Called in to determine whether the presence of the sukkah on campus might be considered a violation of the First Amendment, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) bravely allowed that (in the words of *The Denver Post*) it "could be construed as promoting a religion." Should the swastika scrawlers be apprehended, of course, the ACLU will presumably once again appeal to the First Amendment to defend the defacers right to make protected political statements. No wonder liberalism has troubles in our time.

DEPARTMENT OF FREUDIAN SLIPS: "We need an energy bill that encourages consumption"—George W. Bush, September 23 ■

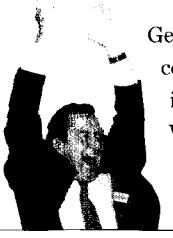
INSIDE THE BOX | Bruce Reed

STUPID PET TRICKS

Bush approach to Hill: Why just wag the dog when you can make it sit, fetch, and roll over? If only Saddam were as easy to conquer as Congress.

INTELLIGENCE TEST

Hill approves independent commission on 9/11. White House refuses to tell investigators what president knew: "We promised Woodward an exclusive!"



SPRINGTIME FOR GERHARD

German Chancellor Schroeder comes from behind to win by saying, "Hell, no!" to war on Iraq. White House reaction: "How dare he exploit the war for political benefit!"

MONEY TRAIL

Treasury Dept. tries to stop Al Qaeda from shifting assets into gold. Better strategy for U.S.: Get terrorists to put their money in the stock market.

HEARTLAND SECURITY

Report says U.S. agriculture vulnerable to terrorist attack. Response from Congress: Scrap the Dept. of Homeland Security! We need contingency plan to make sure farm subsidies continue uninterrupted.

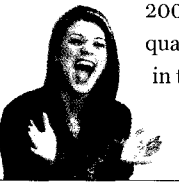
CROSSOVER VOTE

U.S. News reports DNC Chair McAuliffe cuts costs by purging 244,000 dead people from direct-mail lists. Not to worry—they already voted absentee.

FIRST STRIKE

Russian becomes first Miss Universe ever stripped of her title. White House cites as latest proof that deterrence doctrine has failed.

FOOL US ONCE



As sequel to "American Idol," FX network plans 2004 series "American Candidate," so qualifications and experience don't get in the way of viewers picking who they want for president. Now that's a reality show!

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White House Watch

Site Unseen

By Ryan Lizza

It wasn't supposed to turn out this way. When President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair met in the Catoctin Mountains on September 7, they hatched a two-step strategy for pushing the U.N. Security Council to adopt a new resolution on Iraq. "It was at Camp David that Blair and the president crystallized this policy of going to the U.N.," says a State Department official. Bush's speech momentarily spurred the world body to address Iraq's defiance. Blair's Tuesday release of the 50-page dossier documenting Iraq's illicit weapons programs was supposed to deliver the second punch and galvanize support for an actual vote by the Council.

Instead, the three other permanent members of the Council ignored or dismissed Blair's brief. China repeated its familiar line about protecting "Iraq's sovereignty" and warned of "severe consequences" if the United States attacked Iraq unilaterally. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said, "[W]e believe that it is necessary to fulfill those U.N. resolutions on Iraq that exist and not adopt new ones that could complicate the situation." Most remarkably, hours after Blair argued that Iraq could deploy chemical or biological weapons within 45 minutes of an order to use them, French President Jacques Chirac questioned whether Iraq had any proscribed weapons at all. "[W]e obviously have indications, although no proof, and this is, incidentally, one of the reasons why we insist firmly that the inspectors return," said Chirac. Inspectors could "verify if there are arms of mass destruction."

Even before Blair's dossier, of course, the U.S.-U.K. strategy had been derailed by Iraq's promise to allow weapons inspectors to return. "Once Iraq agreed to inspections, that was where the spotlight lay, not on a tough new resolution," says a diplomat from a Security Council member state. The first indication of how big a problem this would be came last Thursday. Hans Blix, the 74-year-old Swede who heads the United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), was keen to brief the Council about his timetable for returning inspectors to Iraq. The Americans and the Brits struggled to delay his presentation in order to shift momentum away from UNMOVIC's return and back toward a new resolution. Bulgaria—which holds the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September and, because it seeks NATO membership, is a staunch Council ally of the United States—announced that the Blix briefing would be delayed several days. But, led by France, almost every other Council member revolted and demanded that Blix brief them right away. "It was a slightly unseemly discussion," recalls one Western diplomat. The United States lost, and Blix was ushered into the room.

Blix's presentation was even more troubling to Bush officials. The administration considers UNMOVIC hopelessly flawed, and yet Blix shows no sign of waiting for a U.S.-backed resolution strengthening its mandate. UNMOVIC was created in 1999 at a low point in Security Council resolve toward confronting Iraq, and it includes several provisions demanded by Saddam Hussein that made it far weaker than its predecessor, the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM). First of all, UNMOVIC is under the control of the U.N. secretary general rather than an independent entity as UNSCOM was. The chairman of UNMOVIC is now advised by a "college of commissioners" who are required to approve the body's decisions. Instead of technical experts, this college is filled with career diplomats who are apt to politicize the body's work. Similarly, UNMOVIC's staff now must be drawn from the ranks of U.N. employees, a rule that eliminates a huge pool of talent from serving as inspectors. Furthermore, as former UNSCOM Executive Chairman Richard Butler points out in his book *The Greatest Threat*, "UNMOVIC staff must be given 'cultural training' to ensure that they would be 'sensitive' to Iraqi feelings." UNMOVIC also shifts the burden of disarmament from Saddam to the inspectors. Previously, Iraq was required to declare its proscribed weapons, and inspectors were only supposed to verify the Iraqi claims. Of course, Saddam never complied with this system, but now the onus is on the inspectors to prove that Iraq is hiding its weapons.

Even worse, UNMOVIC is bound by two "memoranda of understanding" (MOU) negotiated between Baghdad and the U.N. that would serve Saddam well if inspectors return. The first one, from 1996, governs access to "sensitive sites," a term Iraq can unilaterally apply to whatever location it wants. Once a site is declared sensitive, inspectors are required to negotiate access with Iraqi functionaries. "If you are trying to surround a site in Tikrit, you have to wait for a guy to come from Baghdad," says former weapons inspector Tim McCarthy. In the past, Saddam has applied the term to places that housed elements of his intelligence and security apparatus, like the Mukhabarat, Republican Guard, or Special Security Organization. Since Saddam has put his weapons programs under the control of these groups and others like them, the sites would be governed by U.N. rules that effectively block unfettered inspections. The second MOU, negotiated by Kofi Annan in 1998, places the same kind of onerous restriction on eight sprawling "presidential sites"—complexes that past inspectors believed were also key to Saddam's weapons program. Together these two MOUs give Saddam exactly the kind of negotiating power that killed UNSCOM. If inspectors were to return, the United States had hoped it would be clear when Iraq thwarted them, triggering the use of force. But the MOUs reduce Iraqi noncompliance to seemingly trivial violations that don't sound like much of a reason to topple a regime. "It allows this death by a thousand cuts," says McCarthy. "Are you going to go to war over the fact they are allowing fifteen inspectors into a site rather than a hundred?"

And it's not just UNMOVIC's rules that worry some Bushies, especially the hawks. It's Blix himself. "Blix is awful," says a top State Department official. "As head of the IAEA

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United States–European Union Split

Arnold Beichman is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Old habits die hard. The West European democracies have a history of tossing the weak off the speeding sled in hopes of appeasing the wolves. Czechoslovakia was tossed off the Anglo-French sled in 1938 to satisfy a ravening Hitler. When the Soviet satellites rose in rebellion in 1953, 1956, and 1968 against the Kremlin tyrants, the bordering West European democracies did nothing. Their behavior then as now is reminiscent of Benjamin Disraeli's judgment of English statesman Sir Robert Peel: "His judgment was faultless provided he had not to deal with the future." That the Soviet Union finally fell has little to do with Western Europe and everything to do with President Ronald Reagan. Had it been up to continental Europe in the 1980s there would still be a Bolshevik Russia.

The United States is now the victim that the European Union (EU) would like to toss off the sled. Fortunately, we are not in the EU sled, nor, despite the pressing invitations, do we intend to get on. **The EU is building up the United States as the rogue elephant superpower whom it is trying to cage.** What an amnesiac EU forgets is that it is not the United States alone that is the Islamist target but Western civilization itself. Czechoslovakia was to be Hitler's last target; he even signed a piece of paper to that effect. Neville Chamberlain (England) and Edouard Daladier (France) scoffed at the notion that Hitler's real target was the West European democracies. And today? I'm not sure whom the EU regards as the greater threat to world peace: America or Saddam Hussein? Perhaps French president Jacques Chirac really believes that the terrorist wing among the Islamist migrants who live in high-rise slums outside of Paris is dreaming of the day when they become part of the French haute bourgeoisie.

A recent episode demonstrates the EU finger-in-the-eye attitude toward America. Last year the *New York Times* reported on May 4 what in effect was a victory for Europe over the United States: "In a move that reflected a growing frustration with America's attitude toward international organizations and treaties, the United States was voted off the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (CHR) today for the first time since the panel's founding under American leadership in 1947. . . . The unexpected move, which came in a secret vote, was apparently supported even by some friends of the United States. . . . Friends of the United States in Europe and elsewhere have grown increasingly impatient, disappointed and annoyed with actions by Washington."

So to get even with the United States, they elected these undeviating violators of human rights: China, Cuba, Syria, Libya, and, unbelievably, slaveholding Sudan. And even more unbelievable, the CHR has just elected Libya as its chair!

Western Europe has made its choice: keep Saddam Hussein in power. President Bush says no. We are virtually alone in our determination to go to war against the Iraqi dictatorship. So was Britain in 1940 when Winston Churchill took over the reins of a tottering nation. The difference today is that the United States is not tottering.

— Arnold Beichman

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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[International Atomic Energy Agency], he was like an ostrich with his head in the sand." Back in January 2000, Blix's name was put forward after Annan and the Security Council rejected about two dozen other potential chairs. During that process the Russians publicly blocked at least one candidate at the behest of Iraq; so some assume Blix, whom they approved, must be soft on Saddam. In 1998 then-UNSCOM chief Butler produced a damning report to the Security Council even though he knew it would trigger U.S. and U.K. air strikes; some doubt that Blix would ever do the same.

More troubling is the fact that Blix, as head of the IAEA from 1981 to 1997, completely failed to uncover Iraq's nuclear program before the Gulf war. Not only did IAEA inspections fail, but the Iraqis essentially infiltrated the IAEA and used its technical assistance and training to help build their nuclear weapons program. In fact, the Iraqi who ran Saddam's drive to build a bomb in the early '80s also served on the IAEA's board of governors. To be fair to Blix, the pre-Gulf-war IAEA inspections regime was not designed to uncover a program as secretive as Iraq's. And Blix has his defenders. "After the Gulf war, Blix realized that IAEA was hoodwinked by Saddam before 1991, and he led a tough investigation of North Korea," says Patrick Clawson of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "As director of UNMOVIC, Blix has been blunt that he will do what the Security Council tells him to do."

A bigger problem for the administration is the UNMOVIC timeline Blix outlined last week in his Security Council briefing. UNMOVIC is governed by a convoluted set of rules articulated in Security Council Resolution 1284. ("I'm sill learning it, and I've been reading it for four years," says a U.N. Iraq expert about 1284.) Blix, and his colleagues from the IAEA who are in charge of nuclear inspections, will meet with the Iraqis in Vienna from September 30 to October 2. He will then return to New York, and on October 3 he will brief the Council on his talks. Next, UNMOVIC will set up shop in Iraq around October 15 and spend two months preparing for new inspections. Then, around mid-December, UNMOVIC will start 60 days of inspections and "re-baselining"—the U.N. term for determining the current state of Iraq's weapons programs. In mid-February, Blix will report back to the U.N. and submit UNMOVIC's plan for disarming Iraq. In other words, Iraq has successfully started a five-month process of negotiations and bureaucratic delay.

Some Bushies are particularly concerned about this timeline because the current membership of the Security Council will change after the first of the year, when five non-permanent members are replaced. Germany, Spain, Chile, Angola, and Pakistan will replace Norway, Ireland, Colombia, Mauritius, and Singapore. While Spain is one of the few European allies to back Bush, Germany and Pakistan are dead set against war in Iraq. And the United States is likely to have less leverage over Chile than Colombia, the pro-American country it will replace. If the United States fails to win support for a tough resolution now, waiting instead for Blix to report back to the U.N. early next year, it will be even more difficult to win Security Council support for force.

Iraq's friends on the Council are already using the Blix process to stop any new resolution. Blair's dossier was timed to boost prospects for a resolution before Blix meets with the Iraqis in Vienna. But Russia has turned this argument around, saying that the Iraqis should be tested first. "The Russians don't want to do anything until *after* Blix meets with the Iraqis," says an exasperated senior administration official. The U.N. is obsessed with process, and as long as Iraq gives UNMOVIC enough compliance for the Blix process to inch forward, U.S. momentum will stall. In fact, it's not impossible that the United States will abandon the effort to get a new resolution altogether. Warns a top Bush official, "There isn't going to be a vote if we don't get the right resolution." ■

Security Council votes aren't free.

Asking Price

By ASLA AYDINTASBAS

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION has had surprising success lobbying the U.N. Security Council for a tough resolution on disarming Iraq. And it's not because the 15 Council members suddenly believe in the Bush doctrine of preemption. Rather, it's because Washington has been negotiating a series of vote-getting deals with Council members that have little to do with what's right and everything to do with what's political and financially profitable. "There is not an ounce of principle in either the Russian or the French position," says R. James Woolsey, former director of the CIA, referring to two key Security Council members. The danger is that in catering to their narrow interests, the Bush administration may be sacrificing American principles as well.

After staunchly pro-war Great Britain, the permanent Security Council member that produces the least anxiety in Washington is China. While China has carried out several lucrative deals with Saddam Hussein in the past few years—such as refurbishing his country's fiber-optic military communications systems in 2001—Beijing does not have huge commercial or political interests in Iraq, only a desire to purchase Iraq's oil down the road for its growing energy needs. Still, to firm up China's support, the Bush administration has quietly been making concessions. Last month the State Department added the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, a Muslim group in Western China, to its list of terrorist organizations—even though the primary evidence of the group's activities comes from Beijing, and as recently as last May a State Department report harshly criticized China's human rights violations against the Uighur Muslims, with

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whom the group is associated. One former U.S. official says the United States has also been urging the Dalai Lama to take a softer stance in his recently renewed negotiations with the Chinese government on the future of Tibet. To the dismay of some prominent congressional Republicans, the White House has pushed for relaxed controls of technology exports (also eased under the Clinton administration)—including the sale of high-tech items and supercomputers—to China, an issue near and dear to Beijing. Last week, in a sign of growing U.S. success, China's ambassador to the U.N., Wang Yingfan, emphasized the importance of "unity in the council." U.S. officials believe that when the decision day comes, China will most likely abstain—Beijing's traditional way of approving a U.S. initiative.

Despite the historic French-Iraqi alliance—the French, after all, developed Iraq's nuclear program in the 1970s—the United States also counts France as a likely supporter on the Iraq resolution. Administration insiders do not hide the reason: When it comes to oil, France has a lot to lose in a post-Saddam, U.S.-dominated Iraq unless it gets on board the war train now. Last year, under the oil-for-food deal, France sold $1.5 billion worth of goods to Iraq, the most of any nation. Major French companies, like communications giant Alcatel and automakers Renault and Peugeot, have landed lucrative deals with Iraq over the past few years. French oil giant TotalFinaElf currently has the most advantageous position of any foreign oil company in Iraq, with exclusive rights to develop Majnoon and Bin Umar fields, which are among the largest in the world. France is terrified of losing all that, and sources close to the administration say influential consultants and U.S. officials are working to ensure French participation in a post-Saddam Iraqi oil consortium—assuming Paris votes yes on the resolution. Sources in the Iraqi National Congress, the Iraqi opposition group with the closest ties to the Bush administration, also say they have been discussing the shape of a future Iraqi consortium with various interested parties, including the French.

The question of oil is even more central to Russia, whose vote the United States has courted most aggressively. Russia ranked first among nations doing business with Iraq under the oil-for-food program since 1996, with sales exceeding $4 billion; and Russian companies serve as intermediaries in official U.N.-sanctioned oil trades between Iraq and other nations. But recent deals between Russian companies, including oil giant Lukoil, and the Iraqi regime for future concessions of lucrative oil fields will terminate if Saddam is overthrown. (Insiders say Yukos, another Russian oil company, is in a better position to participate in post-Saddam projects than Lukoil, which is seen by both Americans and Iraqis as too close to the Iraqi regime.) On energy issues, Moscow is worried that regime change could result in decreased international dependence on Russian oil, which has salvaged Russia's economy the last few years.

Also high on Russia's wish list is the estimated $8 billion Baghdad owes Moscow. There is talk that Washington might temporarily restructure the oil-for-food program to begin repayments to Russia or "buy off" Russia's debt by being lenient on its debt to the United States. A more likely scenario, insiders say, entails quiet guarantees that the Iraqi debt to Russia would be prioritized in the post-Saddam economy and that Russian companies would play leading roles in the restructuring effort. Russia may also get more U.S. support for its World Trade Organization bid. Last week's visit to the White House by Russia's foreign and defense ministers seems to have raised American hopes that Moscow's vote will be forthcoming, despite Russia's apparent reluctance.

Meanwhile the Bush administration came under fire last week for being willing to "sacrifice Georgia," as a *Wall Street Journal* editorial warned, to get a U.N. vote. Vladimir Putin has threatened military action there on the grounds that Georgia harbors Chechen rebels and that an incursion would be nothing more than a "preventive strike" as authorized by U.N. Article 51. While Russia will not likely gain a totally free hand in Georgia—the United States already has a military presence there, and Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze (hailed as a hero for his role in ending the cold war) has too many friends in Washington and in the Bush administration—sources say Putin may get an agreement allowing limited, short-term hot pursuit there. (This has happened before: Foreign policy experts say giving Russia a free hand in Chechnya was the price Washington paid for Moscow's support of the war in Afghanistan.) This week Colin Powell signaled that Washington might not stand in the way of Russian military action in Georgia when he told a Russian paper, "Russia must decide for itself what it must do in self-defense; I have no intention of telling Russia what to do."

NINE VOTES ARE required for the 15-member Security Council to pass a toughened-up resolution. The United States and Britain are obviously on board. And, should the administration secure a green light from Russia and France, senior officials say enlisting the five additional votes will not be a problem. Few of the smaller, non-permanent members will want to defy a great power—though they can still make clear that they expect Washington's gratitude in return. Bulgaria, for instance, hopes to receive Washington's help in its upcoming NATO membership bid and in collecting the $1.5 billion of Iraqi debt incurred prior to the Gulf war. Colombia hopes for greater support for its war on leftist rebels and for a muting of U.S. criticism of human rights abuses by the country's paramilitary forces. Ireland and Norway are expected to follow France in a yes vote as part of a joint European stance. And few expect Singapore, Mauritius, Cameroon, Mexico, and Guinea to oppose a resolution, if only because they have no reason to anger the United States.

The real prize for Washington, though, would be having Syria abstain—or even assent. It's true that Syria's economic relations with Baghdad have blossomed in the past few years, and observers say Syria's cash-strapped economy is particularly dependent on its smuggling of 180,000 barrels per day of Iraqi oil outside the U.N.'s control. Still, while publicly critical of Washington's policy of regime change in Iraq, Syria has long engaged in a bitter power struggle with Saddam for

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regional influence. And more than anything, what probably keeps young Bashar Assad awake at night is the possibility of his being next on Washington's regime-change list. Since September 11, 2001, American officials say, Syria has cooperated with Washington's fight against Al Qaeda. And the same survivalist instinct that ensured Syria's support for the United States in the Gulf war might again push the regime to agree to another U.S.-led action in the region, says a former senior U.S. official. Syria's reward last time was under-the-table cash payments from the Gulf states and Western acquiescence to its control of Lebanon. This time, observers note, even a Syrian abstention would pave the way for greater international economic aid to Damascus and perhaps a promise that the country's name would be struck from the hawks' to-do list. That, given Syria's ongoing support for Hezbollah and for other terrorist groups, would represent a flagrant abandonment of American moral consistency in the war on terrorism.

As horse-trading accelerates this week, Washington's ability to secure an ironclad resolution from the U.N. will depend largely on its willingness to compromise cash and principles for key votes. Voting nations are proving themselves all too happy to oblige. The question is: Is America also too happy to oblige? ■

The post-Saddam danger from Iran.

Persian Gulf

By Eli J. Lake

So far America's war on terrorism has converged nicely with the regional interests of the world's leading sponsor of international terrorism: Iran. After September 11, 2001, the United States worked with Tehran's mullahs to help oust their Sunni rivals to the east in Afghanistan, the Taliban. And now, nearly 13 months after Osama bin Laden's hijackers toppled the World Trade Center, President Bush has made it clear he intends to repeat the favor by toppling Iran's rival to the west: Saddam Hussein.

Nonetheless, the Islamic Republic is worried—worried enough to ask a delegation of former high-ranking U.S. diplomats and congressional staffers last month whether the president respects the sovereignty of Ayatollah Ali Khomeini's government. "They are not happy about what the Bush administration has to say about them, and they believe they are the next card in the deck," says Edward Walker, President Clinton's former assistant secretary of state for Near East Affairs. Walker, along with former Undersecretary of Defense Frank Wisner, former Undersecretary of State Tom Pickering, and a handful of congressional staff members, met Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi on September 12 at Iran's U.N. mission in New York during the U.N. General Assembly meeting. According to Walker, Kharrazi bluntly said he believed the Bush administration has a "hidden agenda" to undermine his government and asked the delegation to convey this concern to the State Department.

Until this summer the Iranians had had plenty of opportunity to discuss such matters with U.S. diplomats directly. Indeed, during the last General Assembly meeting in November 2001, the State Department met frequently with Iranian diplomats to plan the Bonn Conference that ultimately established the interim Afghan authority. Since July, however, U.S. policy toward Iran has shifted from exploring ways to cooperate with Tehran on regional issues to supporting the greatest threat to the regime—the students, writers, clerics, and workers who have taken to the streets in open opposition to the government. At this month's U.N. General Assembly, the only face-to-face conversation between Kharrazi and Secretary of State Colin Powell was during a meeting with foreign ministers from Afghanistan, its neighbors, and Russia—a grouping referred to as the "six plus two" in diplomatic shorthand—to discuss policy toward the Central Asian state. Thus the Iranians must rely on the assurances of former ambassadors that the United States does not intend to change its regime. "We made assurances that there was no administration policy to overthrow the regime, regardless of what people might think," Walker said.

But Walker may be wrong. While the United States is still a party to the 1981 Algiers agreement—which codified U.S. recognition of the Islamic Republic of Iran after the revolution and subsequent hostage crisis—Bush and his advisers have also decided there is no value in working with the country's elected, though largely powerless, president, Mohammed Khatami. As Zalmay Khalilzad, senior director for Southwest Asia, Near East, and North Africa on the National Security Council, put it in August, "Our policy is not about Khatami or Khomeini, reform or hard-line; it is about supporting those who want freedom, human rights, democracy, and economic and educational opportunity for themselves and their fellow countrymen and women." Considering that by almost all indications the Iranians "who want freedom" also want to overthrow the government, it is understandable why Kharrazi would ask for a clarification of the president's plans for Tehran.

If Iran isn't reassured, it may begin causing real problems for America's upcoming war with Iraq—either by undermining the military effort itself or, more likely, by interfering with the post-Saddam political order the United States tries to establish. "The current U.S. policy, which is ambiguous, could influence the Iranians in a post-Saddam Iraq to try to secure their own interests, which may not fit into what we're trying to do," Walker says. In other words, the Bush team's goals of regime change in Baghdad and regime change in Tehran may be about to slam into one another.

Eli J. Lake is the State Department correspondent for UPI.

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U.S. RELATIONS WITH Iran were tenuous prior to the first Gulf war as well. In August 1990, shortly after Saddam invaded Kuwait, then-Secretary of State James Baker instructed his diplomats to draft a short note, to be passed on to Ayatollah Khomeini's government through the Swiss Embassy in Tehran, explaining that the United States would not use the opportunity of its pending war with Iraq to attack Iran and would expect similar reassurances from the mullahs. "There was kind of a mutual understanding," says David Mack, the deputy assistant secretary of state for Near East Affairs at the time. "We should communicate with each other and do this in a way that made sure the Iranians knew [that] when one of our cruise missiles should stray into their territory it was not meant for them."

Because the first President Bush opted not to send in the Army to occupy Baghdad, there was no need to gauge Tehran's likely reaction to an American occupation of Iraq. This time, however, the United States needs to know ahead of time. And if Iran's approach to a post-Saddam Iraq is anything like its approach to a post-Taliban Afghanistan, the Bush administration has reason to be concerned. For starters, the CIA believes Iran's intelligence services have funneled arms and cash to Ismail Khan, a former mujahedin warlord and the current governor of Herat, a city near the Iranian border. Furthermore, U.S. officials from Khalilzad to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld have openly accused the Iranian intelligence services of providing safe haven for senior Al Qaeda leaders during and after Operation Enduring Freedom. One former U.S. intelligence official, still working in a consulting capacity on the war on terrorism, says, "Iran is scared poopieless about the prospect of pro-American regimes on either side of it."

In Afghanistan, Iran's two main intelligence services, the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) and the Pasdaran (the intelligence arm of the Revolutionary Guard), have exercised influence through the Northern Alliance warlords they supported in the six years prior to the September 11 attacks—when the United States largely stayed out of the Afghan civil war. In the case of Iraq, Iran's intelligence apparatus supports, to varying degrees, three different opposition groups, all of whom sent high-ranking delegations to Washington in August for meetings with Rumsfeld, Vice President Dick Cheney, and the undersecretaries of state and defense.

The first of these groups is the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the semi-autonomous party that controls the eastern part of Iraqi Kurdistan. Iran began providing small arms to the PUK in 1995, a development that led its rival, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, to align with Saddam in the mini-civil war that took place in northern Iraq in 1996. The PUK's leader, Jalal Talabani, went to Iran last February—only a few weeks after Bush's State of the Union address declaring Iran a member of the "axis of evil"—and received assurances that the border between his territory and Iran would remain open despite his intention to forge a close alliance with the United States. That border is crucial for Talabani because the Iranians sell the Kurds gasoline and occasionally sell spare parts and ammunition for the PUK militia.

The second Iraqi opposition group that receives support from Iran is the Iraqi National Congress (INC). Ahmad Chalabi, one of the founders of the INC and the opposition leader with the best connections in Washington, visited Iran twice this summer and has served as a back channel between Washington and Tehran. In August he told the administration the Iranians would not interfere with America's war and may even assist U.S. efforts to oust Saddam. Chalabi has managed to get the Iranians to allow his men to use Iranian territory to launch operations into southern Iraq and even to set up a radio transmitter in Iran to broadcast into northern Iraq. In addition, the INC operates a U.S.-funded office in Tehran and has regular contacts with the Iraqi opposition group with the greatest allegiance to Iranian intelligence: the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI.

Iran does not tell Chalabi or Talabani what to do, and in many ways their relationships with the mullahs stem from necessity—until fairly recently the U.S. government would not offer protection or serious assistance to either group. SCIRI, however, is a different story. And its relationship with Tehran should sound alarm bells in Washington.

SCIRI IS ESSENTIALLY an umbrella group for fundamentalist Shia Islamists who oppose Saddam's rule. Its office space in Tehran is provided and paid for by its Iranian hosts. Its operational arm is largely made up of groups that trace themselves back to Al Dawa, or "the Call," an organization of Islamic radicals supported by Iran in the 1980s and 1990s. Seventeen members of Al Dawa were rounded up and imprisoned in Kuwait in 1984 after launching a spectacular series of suicide attacks on Western targets in the country, including truck bombings of the U.S. and French Embassies on December 12, 1983, that killed five people and wounded dozens. The leader of the group was Mustafa Youssef Badreddin, the brother-in-law and cousin of Hezbollah master terrorist Imad Mughniyah—who earlier that year planned the bombing of the U.S. Marine Corps barracks and Embassy in Lebanon. One of Mughniyah's demands for the release of hostages later that decade was the release of the "Kuwait 17."

Following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the Kuwait 17 either broke out of prison or were freed (reports vary) and, according to Mack, allied themselves with their former Kuwaiti captors in opposition to Saddam. And after the Gulf war Al Dawa began working with the United States. "We took a decision that their past was sufficiently ambiguous and unseemly and involved terrorism against the United States, so I didn't meet with them," Mack said. "However, they saw other people at a lower level."

Today four separate groups trace themselves back to Al Dawa and help to compose SCIRI. All four maintain regular contacts with Iranian intelligence. Nabeel Musawi, the INC's chief diplomat and a key link with the Iran-based Iraqi opposition, said in a phone interview that different Iranian

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security services wield power over different Al Dawa factions. Which brings us back to the question of whether the Iranian government believes it is a target in the war on terrorism. If the Iranians believe Bush seeks an end to their regime, then there is plenty of trouble they could cause U.S. efforts in Iraq, particularly during the rebuilding phase that would follow Saddam's overthrow. And the four Al Dawa branches of SCIRI would make the perfect front men through whom the mullahs could act.

Danielle Pletka, a former Republican staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, says she would not be surprised if Iranian intelligence attempted in post-Saddam Iraq an operation similar to the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers, a housing facility for U.S. service personnel stationed in Saudi Arabia. "If in fact the Iranians feel the safety and security of their regime is hanging in the balance, I can imagine them using all the tools at their disposal, including terrorism. Remember Khobar Towers."

Another possibility is that the Iranians might use their influence near the border in Basra—where one Al Dawa branch, known as the Union of Islamic Forces, is based—to create a base of operations to attack pro-American officials in a post-Saddam government. (The parallel here might be Iran's ongoing support of Ismail Khan in Eastern Afghanistan.) As Francis Brooke, Washington adviser to the INC, points out, "If the Iranians believe the Americans are a mortal threat to their regime, you could see a situation where the Iranians provoke Iraqi officials in the next government to go after those they see as pro-American." Or the Al Dawa groups might return to their old form and try to blow up the U.S. Embassy in a liberated Baghdad. Changing regimes in one "axis of evil" state is hard enough. But changing regimes in two, the Bush administration may soon find out, is harder still. ■

On the Hill

The Wonk

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

WHEN DONALD RUMSFELD arrived at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing to testify about a possible war with Iraq last week, he faced a less-than-fearsome group of interrogators. Seven of the 13 Democratic senators seated above him were freshmen. Even the more senior Democrats, accustomed to debating domestic policy, seemed out of their element. And it didn't take long for that gravitas deficit to become painfully evident. Rumsfeld talked down to the junior Democrats. When Mark Dayton of Minnesota haltingly asked what has happened to make the United States hurry to war, for instance, Rumsfeld snapped at him: "What's different? What's different is *three thousand people were killed*!" Senior Democrats struggled as well. After the defense secretary explained that Saddam Hussein's underlings would likely be afraid to use nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons for fear of U.S. retribution, Kennedy seemed to hear the opposite. "So if he says go, they'll go. That's what I'm hearing back from you," a puzzled-looking Kennedy said. "No, you're misunderstanding," Rumsfeld testily replied. And the ultra-long-winded West Virginian Robert Byrd bogged down Rumsfeld in tangential arguments about the Biological Weapons Convention and a *Newsweek* article on American support for Saddam in the 1980s. As Byrd waved the article in the air, repeating the phrase, "Are we, in fact, now facing the possibility of reaping what we have sown?" the audience laughed at his theatrics. The Democrats had picked this fight with Rumsfeld—and he was routing them.

Finally, the committee chairman, Democrat Carl Levin, cut Byrd off. At that moment he seemed like the only grown-up in the room. And that's symbolic of the bookish Michigan liberal's role in his party right now. Thanks to a safe seat, a lack of national ambition, and the credibility that comes from his detailed mastery of defense arcana, Levin can say what most of his Democratic colleagues feel but are afraid to assert: that there's no good reason to go after Iraq now. Although Democrats like Tom Daschle and Al Gore fired back at the White House this week, there's little doubt that most will back a strong resolution next month. Unfortunately for Levin's fellow skeptics, there aren't many others like him in the party. Which helps explain why George W. Bush's first victory of this war has come against the Democrats.

IN MANY WAYS Carl Levin—a former Detroit city councillor and civil rights lawyer—is an unlikely spokesman for his party on military issues. The last Democrat to head the Armed Services Committee, former Georgia Senator Sam Nunn, showed, via his conservatism on domestic issues, pro-Pentagon views, and Southern drawl, that he was no holdover from the party's anti-Vietnam past. Levin is different, following more in the tradition of former House Armed Services Chairman Les Aspin, another brainy dove with a shambling appearance and a voracious appetite for policy.

So while Levin doesn't command the media attention of a Joe Biden or a John Kerry, Democrats say he wields considerable private influence. One party leadership aide says that in private meetings Levin is accorded a rare deference by his colleagues on military issues. Just as Al Gore and Nunn proved themselves by boning up on throw-weights and reentry vehicles in the '80s, Levin "impressed everyone by mastering the arcana of defense policy," says Will Marshall of the Progressive Policy Institute. John McCain publicly underscored Levin's stature when he said during his 2000 presidential bid that, if elected, he'd ask Levin to help advise him on America's national security priorities.

Although Levin opposed the 1991 Gulf war resolution—saying he feared "a broader conflagration in the Middle East with unknown results" (oops)—he is generally considered a

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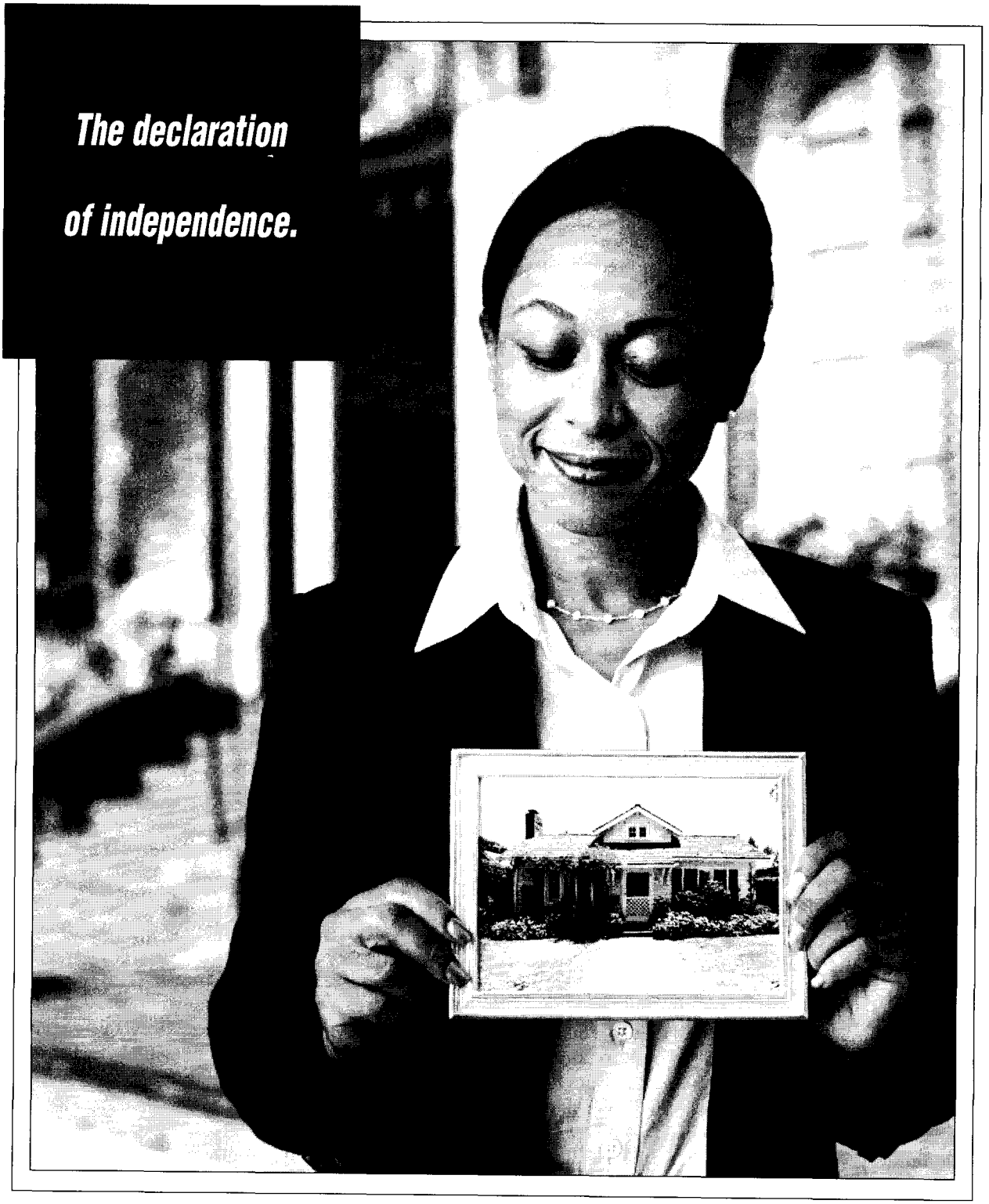
The declaration of independence.



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foreign policy moderate. He is a devout internationalist, enthusiastically supported Bill Clinton's interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo, and focuses on arms control and nonproliferation. He's also stern enough to propose, as he did in January, that the United States withdraw its troops from Saudi Arabia in favor "of a place that is more hospitable." He has supported the military spending increases of the past few years but often opposes flashy new weapons systems like the B-2 bomber and national missile defense. Just four days before the September 11 attacks, in fact, Levin's committee stripped $1.3 billion from Bush's missile-defense request and redirected nearly half of the money to anti-terrorism programs.

UNLIKE OTHER DEMOCRATS, who tried to dodge the debate over war with Iraq when it began this summer, Levin quickly presented a position that was unusually coherent. And unlike many other Democrats—including presidential contenders John Kerry, John Edwards, and, more recently, Gore—Levin focused not on the procedural questions of arms inspectors and international support but on Bush's fundamental premise that an Iraq attack would be a good thing.

His basic argument is this: Until it's clear Iraq poses an imminent threat, the United States should continue to contain and deter it. The threshold for military action, Levin told NPR earlier this month, would only be "if there's evidence that [Iraq] participated in nine-eleven, or if they are on the verge of using a weapon of mass destruction, or we are persuaded that they have a nuclear weapon, for instance, and are about to use it." Saddam is concerned foremost with his own survival, Levin says, and, fearing retaliation, is thus not likely to use weapons of mass destruction against the United States. That is, unless we go into Iraq with the stated intent of capturing or killing him. "We know if we attack him, he's going to use every weapon he's got, including biological and chemical weapons," Levin said on ABC's "Nightline" on September 4. "The result of our attack would be his using the very weapons we are trying to deter." What other Democrat has made this case so unapologetically?

But coherence hasn't been enough for Levin to win over his colleagues, whom he has been urging to put up more resistance. Levin has continued to hold hearings airing doubts about the war. But he now seems resigned to the likelihood of a war and is hoping it can be conditioned to the U.N.'s blessing. "[I]f force is going to be used, having the weight of the world behind the use of force is very, very important," he told the Fox News Channel last Sunday. Now Levin says he may introduce an alternative resolution to this effect when the Senate votes next month. But Levin seems unlikely to win that fight either. And in any case it's probably too late to slow the stampede by his most prominent colleagues to back the White House. Most Democrats expect an Iraq resolution to pass with overwhelming support within their party. As an aide to one Democrat, with political pressures to consider, puts it: "Levin's got nothing to lose. He can let it rip." One suspects a lot of other Democrats privately wish they could, too. ■

Where have all the new meds gone?

Drug Abuse

By NICHOLAS THOMPSON

THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY has suffered some serious blues in the past 18 months: HIV-positive Africans and old ladies in wheelchairs have cursed it; newspapers have challenged its accounting; stocks have plummeted. The recession, war in Afghanistan, and terrorism around the world may have caused Americans plenty of stress and headaches, but investors, at least, are reaching for the bottles without the childproof caps. In the past year, shares in the Dow Jones breweries-and-distilleries index are up 25 percent; shares in the pharmaceuticals index, meanwhile, are down 25 percent.

And the industry deserves it. For years it has squeezed consumers the world over, endlessly arguing that it needs its huge profits in order to invest in new, lifesaving innovations. But while that might once have been true, lately the industry hasn't been innovating at its past rate—and that's probably the main reason investors have started to back off.

According to a May report by the nonprofit National Institute for Health Care Management (NIHCM), the pharmaceutical industry has been producing a much higher percentage of "me too" drugs and far fewer truly innovative ones over the past decade. Most damningly, the report shows that the number of drug applications the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) puts on a priority track (because they appear "to represent an advance over available therapy") has shrunk dramatically relative to the number put on a standard track (because they appear "to have therapeutic qualities similar to those of an already marketed drug").

If the NIHCM report doesn't convince you, just turn on your television and note which drugs are being marketed most aggressively. Ads for Celebrex may imply that it will enable arthritics to jump rope, but the drug actually relieves pain no better than basic ibuprofen; its principal supposed benefit is causing fewer ulcers, but the FDA recently rejected even that claim. Clarinex is a differently packaged version of Claritin, which is of questionable efficacy in the first place and is sold over the counter abroad for vastly less. Promoted as though it must be some sort of elixir, the ubiquitous "purple pill," Nexium, is essentially AstraZeneca's old heartburn drug Prilosec with a minor chemical twist that allowed the company to extend its patent. (Perhaps not coincidentally researchers have found that purple is a particularly good pill color for inducing placebo effects.)

NICHOLAS THOMPSON is a Markle Fellow at the New America Foundation.

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You deserve a factual look at...

Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank")

Can Israel survive without it?

Many people believe that the "conflict" between Israel and the Palestinians could be resolved if Israel were to consent to the creation of Palestinian state in Gaza and in all or most of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"). Even our president has advocated this outcome, contingent on the "good behavior" of the Palestinians. But would the creation of such a state be a solution to the conflict or, just as the Oslo Accord, another illusion that would exacerbate the conflict, rather than terminate it?

What are the facts?

The Root of the conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not about borders and not about the Palestinians. The conflict is not about the size of Israel. It is about Israel's very existence. Israel, of whatever size and within whatever boundaries, is unacceptable to the Arabs. In surrendering strategic territory, Israel is gambling with its very life. The PLO still adheres to its infamous "phased plan." It calls for first creating a Palestinian state on any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment a final allied Arab assault against the truncated Jewish state.

The Importance of territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance and that Israel should therefore not hesitate to relinquish "land for peace." But that is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over $50 billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—enormous quantities of tanks, aircraft of all kinds, and much more. The Arab state possess large arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements that Israel may make with the Palestinians. For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is an indispensable line of defense, especially for a country as small as Israel. It totally controls access to Israel's heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense, to be able to peer deeply into the enemy's territory and to get early warning of any attack. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them, with the Arrow or other sophisticated anti-missile systems. Unlike the U.S., Israel cannot maintain a fleet of nuclear submarines for "second strike" deterrence. But it can maintain dozens of mobile missile launchers safe in underground tunnels hewn into the rock of the Judean mountains.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to its pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum to exist. And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen Palestinian terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which is only nine miles wide at its waist. It contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

> "Without Judea/Samaria (the 'West Bank') Israel would be totally indefensible; therefore, neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States would be served by Israel's relinquishing control of the 'West Bank'."

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently comes to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the only democracy, the only country that is unquestioningly aligned with us. It is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness, the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time," neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States would be served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank."

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The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), the drug industry's powerful lobbying group, disputes the claim that it's innovating less than in the past, and it calls the NIHCM study politically motivated because health insurance plans critical of PhRMA's high prices support the organization. "Maybe they are right; maybe they are wrong. But it appears that they had a desire to reach a certain conclusion," says Michael Friedman, who currently runs PhRMA's Office for Biomedical Preparedness. The organization also wrote a rebuttal to the NIHCM report that dismissed the "priority" and "standard" designations as an FDA "management tool" based on incomplete information about a drug's potential.

But just because something is a management tool doesn't mean it doesn't convey useful information. According to Jane Henney, the most recent FDA commissioner, the NIHCM data are not only very useful; they actually understate the reality. That's because in the early years that NIHCM analyzed, the FDA put far fewer drugs on the "priority track" because it could only grant that categorization to potential lifesavers.

Everyone should hope the pharmaceutical industry gets its groove back. And it might—particularly if heavy investments in research on the human genome start paying dividends. But for now the industry seems caught in a cycle that stifles the thing it should want most: innovation.

THE CLICHÉ OF the moment is that pharmaceutical companies have picked the low-hanging fruit, developing drugs that interact with the limited number of enzymes and molecules that we already understand and have thoroughly modeled. For example, Lipitor, the best-selling drug in the world last year, lowers cholesterol by acting upon a molecule that scientists had studied for years.

But people have always mourned the loss of the low-hanging fruit—and then smart and innovative folks built taller ladders. The tools and computational abilities available to drug companies today dwarf those that companies employed to develop the blockbusters that fueled the 1990s boom. Scientists now have access to the human genome and a vastly increased understanding of everything from gene expression to organ physiology as well as extraordinarily powerful computing and modeling capabilities. In many ways, discovery should be easier and cheaper now than ever before.

A better explanation for the pharmaceutical slump is a shift in priorities toward marketing, particularly since the FDA first allowed companies to directly target consumers five years ago. According to data collected by Alan Sager, a professor at the Boston University School of Public Health, the number of research and development (R&D) employees at companies making patented drugs declined slightly between 1995 and 2000, while the number of people working in marketing shot up 59 percent. "Drug companies trumpet the value of breakthrough research, but they seem to be devoting far fewer resources than their press releases suggest," says Sager.

Moreover, drug companies have learned that when they can't create a new drug to treat an existing illness, they can create a new illness to treat with existing drugs. GlaxoSmithKline's multimillion-dollar promotion of anxiety disorder as a pernicious national problem enabled the company to make billions more selling Paxil—a drug most experts believe is needed by only a small fraction of the people who take it. Unimed is busy pushing the idea that there's a national problem called male menopause—a problem that just happens to be treatable by a testosterone gel the company makes. The gel is currently FDA-approved for men with rare—and thus relatively unprofitable—problems such as underdeveloped testes.

But even this shift toward marketing doesn't fully explain the decline in pharmaceutical innovation. Just because companies are now able to sell flotsam doesn't mean that they wouldn't rather be selling gold. The problem is the absence of truly innovative drugs, such as Viagra or Prozac, in current drug company pipelines. And the explanation for that might well come from the supposed fount of American innovation: our patent system.

THE LAST DECADE has witnessed an explosion in patent awards to pharmaceutical companies, with the number of biotechnology patents granted annually increasing by about 500 percent in the past 15 years. Last year GlaxoSmithKline was awarded 229 patents. Aventis has been granted an *average* of 301 patents over the past five years, according to *Technology Review*'s annual patent scorecard.

The explosion has a couple of causes. One is simply growth in the field, but another is that companies have found they can significantly extend patents through various legal maneuvers—from agreeing to test on children (Congress passed this law to create incentives for companies to perform separate tests on kids) to filing new patent applications on old drugs about to lose their protection. By slightly tweaking Prilosec into Nexium, AstraZeneca got several years of additional protection for a hot-selling prescription drug. "Companies today have found that the return on investment for legal tactics is a lot higher than the return on investment for R&D," says Sharon Levine, the associate executive director of the HMO Kaiser Permanente. "Consumers today are paying an inordinate premium under the guise of the creating the stream of innovation in the future. But it's actually funding lawyers."

Even more important, the patent morass may be blocking new lines of research altogether. Every time a company wants to pursue research on a certain biological process, or even the individual genes involved, it has to find out who owns the patents and the price of a license, if one is even available. Last year Peter Ringrose, then the chief scientific officer at Bristol Myers Squibb, told *The New York Times* that there were "more than 50 proteins possibly involved in cancer that the company was not working on because the patent holders either would not allow it or were demand-

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ing unreasonable royalties." Rebecca Eisenberg, a law professor at the University of Michigan, has called this the "tragedy of the anti-commons," with companies and universities grabbing property that should remain in the public domain.

The key distinction is between "upstream" and "downstream" patents. Downstream patents cover final products, such as actual drugs. Upstream patents cover the various components used to make these final products. For many years companies and, particularly, universities freely granted access to upstream patents. For example, when researchers at Stanford and Berkeley came up with a technique for combining DNA from different species in the mid-'70s, they patented their discovery and licensed it out cheaply to anyone who wanted it—a major source of the boom in modern molecular biology.

In the past 20 years, however, Congress has repeatedly passed legislation encouraging biological patents, beginning with the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980—which enables universities to pursue patents—in the hope that it would give them incentives to commercialize their products. The results have been predictable. In late June, for example, Harvard and MIT joined a suit to try to stop Eli Lilly from manufacturing drugs for osteoporosis and sepsis that the universities say infringe on a 15-year-old patent. The companies Incyte and Invitrogen recently found themselves in a legal battle over patents leased from Stanford—patents that both companies would probably have been free to use under the old patent system.

If universities have tied themselves to the cycle, cheekily known as "patent or perish," companies have been still more aggressive about staking—and defending—claims to cellular parts and processes. Two years ago Chiron Corporation stopped hepatitis C vaccine research at four other companies by refusing to license one of its patents. Recently, as the result of work by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Human Genome Sciences (HGS) learned that a receptor it had previously patented was actually an important pathway for HIV to enter cells. The result: HGS can now stop competitors' AIDS research. The U.S. Patent Office has recently made this sort of serendipitous patent use harder, but it can't take away patents already granted.

Companies naturally claim that patents such as HGS's don't hinder research since companies can buy or work around licenses. But that's not convincing. "Unquestionably, progress in science is linked to communication among scientists," says David Lipman, head of the National Center for Biotechnology Information at NIH. "If a growing fraction of research funds are being invested in generating information that is being kept proprietary, then it stands to reason that this would impact on the rate of development of truly novel drugs."

Moreover, biology is moving in the direction of increased integration. One of the brightest current research fields is "systems biology," which hopes to move science from analyzing single cells or proteins to understanding the integrated actions of whole systems. *Science Magazine* just devoted an issue to the field, and Eli Lilly will soon open a giant center for systems biology in Singapore. But studying systems won't work very well if every component is tied up. At the very least, it will take an awful lot of time and an awful lot of lawyers to resolve the gridlock.

THE BEST THING for the pharmaceutical industry would probably be to maintain its strong protection over downstream products while opening access for upstream products. While it may not say this openly, the industry has implicitly supported this by funding public efforts to gather data upstream. For example, five companies are supporting the work of Alfred Gilman, who is trying to build a complete online model of cellular signaling that could dramatically speed drug development while keeping all the data in the public domain.

But most people in the industry rarely voice this view, in large part because they fear that any change to the patent system would bring uncertainty and confusion: The laws are extremely complex right now, but they work reasonably well from the point of view of the industry. Why mix things up and risk unintended consequences? "If you try to make industrial policy decisions, you risk producing bad outcomes that you can't correct until too late," says Lee Bendekgey, the general counsel for Incyte.

Another reason drug companies aren't talking about loosening restrictions on upstream patents is that they are so focused on fighting off legislative efforts by generic-drug developers to weaken their downstream patent protection. And it's much easier to argue that "patents support innovation" than to try to explain that some patents are good for innovation while others are bad.

There is at least one industry voice in favor of opening up licenses, though: Alfred Roach, chairman of a small company called American Biogenetic Services. Roach believes firmly in end-product patent protection, but he thinks that patents often "put an artificial tourniquet on the flow of a new discovery"—a belief informed by his own company's inability a few years back to get a license it needed in order to do work on hepatitis A—and has called for a law requiring patent holders to license their inventions to others at reasonable prices. A former boxer, Roach flies into a rage when asked why the industry doesn't automatically grant licenses at fair prices. "Why not try to share your information with all the different scientists out there for a fair price?" he asks.

Roach probably won't win though. The pharmaceutical industry has perhaps the most powerful lobby in Washington, employing at least 20 former members of Congress, top staffers from the Clinton administration, and the wife of the Senate majority leader. In fact, PhRMA has just added top health care aides from the staffs of John McCain and Bill Frist to its team of sluggers. That may be enough to quash reasonable reforms—even ones that would help the industry do the one thing that everyone wants: produce new, innovative drugs that can save lives. ■

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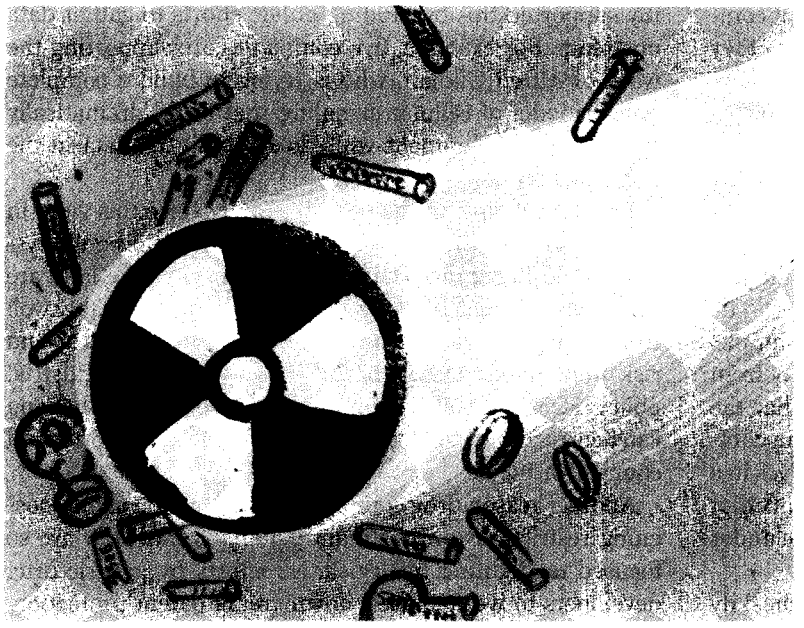
The meaninglessness of "WMD."

Term Limits

By GREGG EASTERBROOK



SADDAM HUSSEIN'S REGIME "is busy enhancing its capabilities in the field of chemical and biological agents," Vice President Dick Cheney told the Veterans of Foreign Wars in August, adding, "These are not weapons designed for the purpose of defending Iraq. These are offensive weapons for the purpose of inflicting death on a massive scale." Billed by the White House as laying out the case for military action against Iraq, the speech employed the phrase "weapons of mass destruction" eight times. George W. Bush also regularly uses "weapons of mass destruction" as a collective term for chemical, biological, and atomic arms. In his 2002 State of the Union address, for example, the president stated that the United States would not "permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most dangerous weapons," citing chemical, biological, and atomic arms as equal concerns.

Indeed, during the last year, politicians, pundits, and the media (including THE NEW REPUBLIC) have used the phrase "weapons of mass destruction" as a constant shorthand for chemical, biological, and atomic arms. As of this writing, the phrase "weapons of mass destruction" had appeared in *The New York Times* in some 250 articles over the past month alone. And while I do not claim to have examined all of these citations, it is a safe bet that most referred collectively to chemical, biological, and atomic arms, implying equivalent power to inflict "death on a massive scale."

Yet their lethal potential is emphatically not equivalent. Chemical weapons are dangerous, to be sure, but not "weapons of mass destruction" in any meaningful sense. In actual use, chemical arms have proven *less* deadly than regular bombs, bullets, and artillery shells. Since the gassing of the trenches in World War I and the Holocaust a generation later, people have been terrified by the thought of death by gas—partly because chemical agents are invisible, partly because we visualize ghastly, helpless choking rather than vanishing in the flash of an explosion. But pound for pound, chemical weapons are less lethal than conventional explosives and more difficult for an attacker or terrorist to use. It's also hard to see what the moral distinction is between being killed by gas and being blown up. Modern artillery shells create horrific scenes of carnage, and yet we don't view them as weapons of "mass destruction," though firing them into an unsuspecting city could readily produce more deaths than gas.

Similarly, biological weapons are widely viewed with dread, though in actual use they have rarely done great harm. The most successful biological warfare to date took place nearly 250 years ago, when the British gave smallpox-laden blankets to French-affiliated Native Americans during the Seven Years' War. Japanese attempts to use biological weapons against China during World War II were of limited success. More recently there have been accidental releases of smallpox and anthrax in the Soviet Union and Ebola exposure in the United States; all did far less harm than would have been caused by the detonation of a single conventional bomb.

Biological agents are surely dangerous: Being alive, they can propagate, in theory "manufacturing" more of themselves from tiny initial amounts. But the biological weapon that creates a runaway effect, killing huge numbers rapidly, so far exists only in science fiction and preposterous Hollywood thrillers such as *Outbreak*. The living things of Earth have spent millions of years evolving defenses against runaway pathogens, and these defenses have grown stronger during the postwar era as public health has improved spectacularly in most nations. Deliberate, systematic distribution of weapons-grade anthrax in the United States in 2001 killed five people—terrible, but hardly "mass destruction" compared to the jet-fuel explosions that killed 3,000 on

ALEX NABAUM

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September 11 and the conventional bomb that killed 168 in Oklahoma City in 1995. Because actual attempts to use bioweapons have been few, it's hard to be sure; but it may well be that, like chemical weapons, biological agents will prove less dangerous than conventional arms, as well as more difficult for armies or terrorists to use.

Then there are atomic and nuclear devices—utterly, unmistakably "weapons of mass destruction." Pound for pound, these are the most awful constructions of human enterprise, thousands or millions of times more dangerous than any chemical or biological arms.

The phrase "weapons of mass destruction," then, obscures more than it clarifies. It lumps together a category of truly terrible weapons (atomic bombs) with two other categories that are either less dangerous than conventional weapons (chemical arms) or largely an unknown quantity (biological agents). This conflation, moreover, muddies the American rationale for military action against Iraq. That rationale should be to prevent Saddam from acquiring atomic weapons. This alone is reason to go to war.

THOUGH CHEMICAL WEAPONS are associated with gruesome mortality, in actual use they have caused horrible choking and blisters—see the poetry of Wilfred Owen, the World War I British soldier whose famed work concluding "The old Lie: *Dulce de decorum est/Pro patri mori*" concerns troops being gassed—but have proven less deadly than bombs or bullets. Fewer than 1 percent of battle deaths during World War I, the only war in which chemical arms were extensively employed, were caused by gas. As John Mueller, a political scientist at Ohio State University, and his son Karl, a RAND Corporation analyst, have written, "In the First World War, only some two to three percent of those gassed on the Western front died while, by contrast, wounds caused by traditional weapons were some 10 to 12 times more likely to prove fatal." American fatalities followed exactly this ratio: 2 percent of those gassed during the war died, compared with 24 percent of those struck by bullets, artillery shells, or shrapnel.

Moreover, during World War I the Germans and British expended one *ton* of gas on average to achieve a single fatality on the opposite side. Chemical weapons were used in huge amounts to small effect because they are hard to deliver and hard to control. They waft on the wind, missing their targets and attenuating to the point that they cease to be lethal. Sunlight breaks down many chemical agents. And artillery shells don't carry chemicals well, because impact tends to immolate the chemical. Finally, in close combat, chemical weapons are as likely to blow back onto your position as to remain behind enemy lines.

Though more frightening than the mustard gas of the Great War, modern chemical arms such as sarin also fare poorly in pound-for-pound comparison. Writing a decade ago for the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, in an article presciently titled "The Myth of Chemical Superweapons," Harvard biologist Matthew Meselson estimated it would require one ton of sarin delivered under perfect conditions to inflict substantial casualties on unprotected civilians. And perfect conditions for gas—no wind, no sun, a very low-flying plane that no one is shooting at—almost never happen. A terrorist crop duster trying to spray sarin over a city, for example, would have to fly at least several hundred feet above the ground to avoid hitting buildings, meaning most of the gas would waft away harmlessly. A 1993 study by the Office of Technology Assessment found that one ton of perfectly delivered sarin, used against unprotected civilians, could kill as many as 8,000 but that even light wind or sunlight would drop the death toll by 90 percent. Eight hundred dead would be horrible, surely, but not "mass destruction" compared with what conventional arms do all too readily. A single U.S. bomb dropped against one Iraqi bunker during the Gulf war, for example, killed 314 civilians.

When the Aum Shinrikyo death cult attacked Tokyo's subway system with sarin in 1995, thousands were sickened but only twelve people killed—and this from the release of gas from multiple containers in an enclosed area without sunlight. The worst known use of gas, by Saddam against the Kurdish town of Halabja in 1988, is generally estimated to have killed 5,000 people, though some analysts think the toll was lower. But in that attack, Iraqi air force planes made repeated, low-level, unopposed passes over defenseless civilians. Regular bombs and strafing would have caused a similar slaughter.

By the end of World War I, improved gas masks were already negating chemical arms on the battlefield, reducing them to the level of annoyance. Similarly, today's much improved "NBC" (nuclear, biological, and chemical) suits for soldiers would probably negate improved chemical arms as battlefield weapons, though the suits are uncomfortable—one reason why, if the United States must invade Iraq, winter would be the best time. America's M1 main tanks and M2 assault vehicles have pressurized sealing systems that would probably render even perfectly delivered modern chemicals weapons useless against armor. The United States and Russia both agreed to destroy their stocks of chemical agents in 1997—incineration is now in progress—partly because these arms are seen as inhumane and partly because the nations' military establishments realized conventional bombs and bullets are more effective anyway.

Assuming Saddam still has stocks of chemical arms, these pose some threat to his neighbors—though Iraq's Scud and Scud-like missiles are inaccurate, and in general missiles are an ineffective means to deliver chemical weapons. The real threat posed by chemical weapons is largely psychological. The notion of being gassed is so horrendous to Israelis that if even one gas fatality were sustained, Israel might strike back with overwhelming force. But it's unlikely that chemical arms in Saddam's possession constitute "weapons of mass destruction" in the literal sense; the world may even be better off if he wastes his money chasing chemicals rather than stockpiling bombs, shells, and other proven munitions.

One substance Iraq was forbidden to import under the U.N. sanctions regime throughout much of the '90s was chlorine, which can be used to make chlorine gas. Chlorine gas

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was the least effective chemical weapon a century ago in World War I, and it hasn't gotten any more potent. While dangerous to unarmed civilians (all weapons are dangerous to unarmed civilians), when it comes to battlefield use, chlorine gas would be the equivalent of the single-shot Enfield rifle. As the Muellers note, depriving Iraq of chlorine on questionable "weapons of mass destruction" grounds meant that much of the country's drinking water was not chlorinated during the '90s—one factor that may have contributed to the Iraqi deaths attributable to sanctions. Richard Garfield of Columbia University, who has studied the numerous Iraqi death estimates, believes sanctions contributed to around 450,000 avoidable childhood deaths. If even a fraction of those were attributable to the ban on chlorine, then excessive fear of chemical arms may have contributed to a policy decision that made the sanctions regime crueler than it needed to be.

THEN THERE ARE biological agents. Supposedly these weapons kill very rapidly in huge numbers. William Cohen, when secretary of defense under Bill Clinton, once held up a small bag of sugar and declared that an equivalent amount of anthrax spores could kill half the population of the District of Columbia. "Dark Winter," a bioterrorism war game conducted a few months before September 11, 2001, at Andrews Air Force Base—and featuring Sam Nunn as "President Nunn"—posited that a handful of terrorists with small quantities of smallpox could set in motion unstoppable events that would kill up to one million Americans. National newscasts have illustrated reports about biological weapons with video clips from the movie *Outbreak*, in which U.S. bombers obliterate entire areas, killing everyone within in order to halt a super-plague. Richard Preston's sci-fi thriller *The Cobra Event* depicted a biological weapon capable of killing everyone in New York City in 24 hours. Since Preston had previously written a more-or-less nonfiction best-seller, *The Hot Zone*, which claimed Ebola could kill millions unstoppably, his *Cobra Event* was said to have deeply disturbed President Clinton—even though *it was a sci-fi novel*. In 2002 the BBC aired a docudrama, which to the viewer looked awfully like a straight news show, in which a single terrorist with smallpox causes a global epidemic that kills 60 million people.

That is the public perception of biological weapons. Here is what has happened in actual use: In 1971 smallpox from the old Soviet bioweapons program got loose in Aralsk, Kazakhstan, a place with terribly low public health standards—life expectancy for men at birth was just 40 years. Despite these seemingly ideal conditions for a runaway plague, the smallpox killed a total of three people. In 1979 an explosion at a Soviet bioweapons plant near Sverdlovsk (now called Ekaterinburg), also a place with poor public health, released a large quantity of weapons-grade anthrax spores into the air. The anthrax killed 68 people. In 1989, monkeys carrying the Ebola virus were accidentally shipped to a government facility in Reston, Virginia, just outside Washington. Workers at the facility were exposed to the virus and then moved freely among friends and family for several days before the situation was discovered. This event—the subject of Preston's book *The Hot Zone*—has since been discussed as if it showed how vulnerable the United States is to bioterrorism. Usually skipped over in such discussions, however, is that the Ebola loosed near the nation's capital in 1989 did not cause a single death.

Historic efforts at killing large populations through biological warfare have met with mixed results. During World War II, Japanese army researchers bred fleas infected with bubonic plague, which were dropped in clouds over Chinese cities and dumped into Chinese water wells. This biological attack, directed against an impoverished population with almost no modern health care, is thought to have killed several thousand Chinese civilians; it was halted when the Japanese realized that plague-infected drinking water was killing their own soldiers in China. But conventional Japanese bombing of Chinese cities also killed thousands. Farther back, during medieval times, siege armies used catapults to hurl the bodies of bubonic-plague victims into cities, hoping to spread contagion. And that's about it for the actual use of biological weapons.

Note that bioweapons have done steadily less harm in recent times, as public health infrastructure has improved. When the Aralsk smallpox outbreak happened, for example, Soviet officials moved rapidly to vaccinate the 50,000 people closest to the area; this stopped the disease, giving it no vulnerable hosts to jump to. Ebola had no impact in the United States in 1989, and anthrax had relatively little impact in 2001, because the releases occurred in areas of high public health and excellent health care services; the pathogens were rapidly isolated and antibiotics were given. In a world of ever-better public health (in the West, at least), using a bioweapon is like shooting a gun at someone wearing a bulletproof vest—the bullet is still dangerous, but there is a reasonable chance it will bounce off.

Consider public health defenses against smallpox: American and European populations retain at least some residual smallpox immunity from the vaccinations that stopped about three decades ago. Estimates vary, but somewhere around half of the United States public probably has some resistance to smallpox, which would instill a partial "herd immunity" against outbreak—the disease could less easily jump from host to host. Smallpox must be spread by person-to-person contact; it does not waft on the breeze. This means that physically isolating an outbreak area (as was done at Aralsk) stops the spread of the disease. Vaccination as many as four days after exposure usually prevents death, as smallpox's incubation time is at least ten days. There are about 155 million doses of smallpox vaccine on hand in the United States—more than enough for all those who were never inoculated—and the government will have roughly twice that amount by year's end. The reintroduction into society of smallpox, declared eradicated by the World Health Organization in 1980, would be a terrible thing. But would "mass destruction" result? Again, possible but not likely.

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What's more, it is unclear that anyone other than the United States, Russia, and the World Health Organization has smallpox samples; the disease no longer exists in nature. Assuming terrorists did acquire some, smallpox would hardly be easy to distribute—aerosol forms last only for a short period and travel a short range, while person-to-person infection would be slowed by "herd immunity."

Anthrax, by contrast, can be spread as a long-lived aerosol, and Iraq is known to have cultured significant amounts of this bioweapon. Israel is relatively safe from an Iraqi anthrax attack, however, because anthrax probably cannot be delivered by missile: Anthrax-loaded warheads, arriving at hundreds of miles per hour, would immolate their own contents. Anthrax could be spread from a low-flying plane, or through the ventilation systems of large buildings. But a low-flying plane could drop bombs, too, and buildings could be blown up; moreover, conventional attacks of this nature would kill people right away, whereas bioweapon attacks would leave time for physicians to save the victims.

Other pathogens might also serve as bioweapons; foes could even employ genetically engineered crop blights designed not to kill people but to cause agricultural failures, the National Research Council recently warned. In theory the germs could be made more cheaply than bombs, putting them within the financial reach of terrorists; in theory they could be produced in small laboratories that are hard to target in counterstrikes; in theory they could even be carried to the target in someone's pocket. But that's all true only in theory. Actual experience suggests that biological weapons are both hard to make and hard to use, for many of the same reasons that medicines are hard to make and don't work unless administered precisely. Aum Shinrikyo employed skilled scientists and spent freely to make "high-grade" anthrax, which it spread around Tokyo on several occasions. The cult gave up on anthrax after it failed to infect even a single person.

Why do bioweapons elicit such anxiety when recent experience suggests they pose less threat than bombs and bullets? Like chemical agents, bioweapons are invisible; human nature dictates that we fear what we cannot see. The American public also shows little understanding of the basics of public health, having developed a media-encouraged phobic conviction that minute quantities of laboratory-made substances are far more dangerous than everyday lifestyle risks. People imagine that one part per quadrillion of dioxin or the incredibly weak electromagnetic fields made by power lines are shocking health threats—yet they cheerfully consume vast amounts of fats and sugars despite the fact that obesity is the number-two cause of death in the United States.

That leaves the one true "weapon of mass destruction" that Iraq or a terrorist might obtain: the atomic bomb.

There is nothing speculative or uncertain about the doomsday power of atomic bombs like those used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (Its still more destructive sibling, the nuclear fusion bomb, is considered too complex for rogue states or terrorists to build.) At least 70,000 people died at Hiroshima, at least 40,000 at Nagasaki. A crude atomic bomb of similar power detonated in a modern city, where large skyscrapers would topple, could produce an even greater death toll. Unlike chemical weapons, there are no questions about whether the wind will blow away the agent or the sun dissolve it; horror is 100 percent certain. Unlike biological weapons, there is no exposure followed by gradual sickening during which doctors could labor to save most victims; horror is instant and irreversible. Everything about the atomic bomb is horrific and *known to work*.

Yet in debates about Iraq, and about global terrorism, everything that isn't a bullet or shell is lumped together under the rubric of "weapons of mass destruction." Virtually every national leader and most major publications invoke this phrase without seeming to care what it means; protests have come only from such quarters as *Slate.com*, *The Village Voice*, *Reason*, and *The Journal of Strategic Studies*. Endlessly referring to "weapons of mass destruction" in this way distracts us from focusing on the one weapon we can be certain causes mass destruction: the atomic bomb.

In 1981, Israeli warplanes blew up an Iraqi reactor designed to make fissile materials, buying the world a decade of grace. The attack on the Iraqi reactor was widely condemned at the time but now looks like one of the smartest and most peace-serving actions any nation ever staged. In 1991 the Gulf war damaged Iraq's atomic-bomb facilities, buying the world another decade of grace. Reports at the time said that Iraq had been less than one year away from building a bomb. Now that second grace period is expiring. No weapons inspector has set foot in Iraq in four years. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, based in London, recently concluded that Iraq could assemble an atomic bomb "within months" of acquiring fissile materials on the black market and is only "several years" away from completing its own facilities to make atomic bomb fuel.

Whether the United States and its allies should invade Iraq is debatable; there are points pro and con. But if we stopped talking in loose generalities about speculative "weapons of mass destruction" and focused on the weapon Iraq seeks that is *known* to cause widespread death, a moral course might become clear. Saddam must not be allowed to become the first madman to acquire the atomic bomb. Even one in his hands and the Middle East would likely enter such a phase of violent turmoil that today's situation will seem like a summer vacation. The threat to U.S. national security would be immense. Dictators of the old Soviet Union held the ultimate weapon, but the old Soviet system had internal restraints missing from Saddam's one-man rule—and, at any rate, there was nothing the United States could have done to deprive the Soviets of nuclear arms without unleashing a cataclysm. Saddam, on the other hand, can be stopped. The locations of his atomic-weapons facilities are known. Invasion or not, they can be destroyed, preventing him from inflicting mass death upon the innocent. What, exactly, are we waiting for? ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Ages of Anxiety

MUCH HAS BEEN said about the Salinger quality of **Igby Goes Down** (United Artists). True enough, but there is one resemblance that struck me especially. In the late 1940s I admired the stories that Salinger published and looked forward to his novel. When I saw the first announcement, my heart sank. "*The Catcher in the Rye*," I moaned. "What a terrible title. The book will never go." I would like to be equally correct about *Igby Goes Down*, which, too, has a terrible title.

Burr Steers, who wrote and directed *Igby*, comes from the upper crust of American society and has added smartly to the small but growing body of films about the crusted, especially the younger ones. In fact, Steers, who has also done some acting, was in a previous slice of that crust, Whit Stillman's *The Last Days of Disco*. Igby himself is a bit younger than the disco crowd—seventeen. He is a sort of updated Holden Caulfield, and, something like Holden, he is bouncing around prep schools. He is now at a military academy where he also bounces. (His name is actually Jason: Igby was the name of a childhood toy bear on which misdeeds were blamed. The name has clung to the boy.)

The film's first moments establish its eccentric view, a discomfitingly comic view that becomes its chief verity. We hear a whistling snore, and the camera pans to a woman asleep in a large bed. She, we learn, is Mimi, mother of the two boys who are at her bedside, Igby (as a child) and his older brother Ollie. The sons slip a cellophane bag over Mimi's head and tie a towel around her neck. She doesn't die, but this escapade is a sample of the relationships in this family—not the usual squabbles of family war, but high-flown, velvet-lined hatreds that continually approach the drastic. Add that the father of the family, whom we soon meet, is a far-gone alcoholic almost imploring insanity to hurry up and rescue him from the world, and the film's terrain is in sight.

That opening episode is sometimes referred to, via flashback, in the main stratum of the film, which is set in the present, with Igby in military school, sort of, and Ollie at Columbia University. Igby's discontent, which has been with him since childhood—a loneliness that persists even when he is with others—is nourished by adolescence and drives him into adventures in Manhattan's Tribeca. His exploits inevitably entail his brother, his mother, and her companion, the sons' ultra-rich godfather, who is a real estate Inca. Igby, bright, perceptive, chafed by a demon of discomfort, slides from one oasis of pot or sex or prank to another, little concerned with what used to be the classic interest of the young—the future. He lives today, popping pills and boffing, with only an occasional verbal obeisance to the rest of his life ahead of him.

Thus his character is not dazzlingly different from other discontented adolescents in films, but Igby is particularly engaging because he is so deeply lost, so deeply greedy about the world, surrounded by characters in lofts or luxe apartments who are for the most part devoid of credible sympathy or love. And he has been drawn by Steers with a large dollop of wry wit. For instance, Igby tells a girl that he is supposed to go to New Jersey but has been putting it off. She says, "That's procrastination." He says, "Not to go to New Jersey is not procrastination."

The story has some surprises, but fortunately not too many. Matters end more or less in the way they have been grimly or ridiculously tending, and Igby emerges possibly tempered, possibly not. What hangs on the viewer is the sense that, give or take some details, this sort of mental and moral testing is a passage that many young people must now traverse, a passage most hazardous for the most sensitive.

Kieran Culkin is perfect as Igby. Not a moment of his performance is self-conscious, even when self-consciousness is enthralling Igby himself. Susan Sarandon is haughty and affectionately cruel as Mimi; Ryan Phillippe satisfies as Ollie; Claire Danes is nicely malleable as a girl who gets involved with both brothers. A revelation is Jeff Goldblum's solidity as the smiling, monstrous real estate tycoon. The boozed-out father has some scenes, rather than a character, and Bill Pullman handles them with resigned bewilderment.

The film is made visually luxurious, just enough, by the cinematography of Wedigo von Schultzendorff, who did Woody Allen's *Hollywood Ending*. Steers directs with assurance and without trickery. Presumably his insights are behind all the performances, and they impress. In all, Steers has insured that this teenage film will be recognizable to teenagers but not limited to them.

The French director François Ozon is, so far, nicely unpredictable. His earlier film *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* dealt in high style with male homosexuality. Then came *Under the Sand*, a haunting account of marital love. Now Ozon presents **8 Women** (Focus), which is a deliberately stagy lark.

Ozon says that he wanted to make a period film about women and tried to get the rights to Clare Boothe Luce's seventy-year-old play *The Women*. Luckily for us, he failed. He found a 1960s play by a French dramatist named Robert Thomas that is more entertaining than the Luce play, and he has filmed it with straight-faced camp.

Eight women are the entire cast. There is only one set, a very large living room. (The camera goes upstairs once in a while, but this doesn't really matter.) We are in a grand country house in winter. At the start, a murder is discovered. The eight women, almost all of them present at the start, are connected in various ways to the victim. Soon we learn that the telephone has been cut; the one car disabled; the front gate blocked. So the murderer is in the house. Of the eight women, two are quite young, one is the black maid, and the other five—no matter what their roles are called—are Danielle Darrieux, Catherine Deneuve, Emmanuelle Béart, Isabelle Huppert, and Fanny Ardant. With that assemblage, the screenplay is almost superfluous.

The two young women in the cast, Virginie Ledoyen and Ludivine Sagnier, are pleasant enough, and the maid, Firmine Richard, is amiable, but it is our awareness that five of the brightest French stars have come together to have fun that makes the picture bubble. Darrieux (who sixty-six years ago turned me down in favor of Charles Boyer in *Mayerling*) is a dream grandmother. Deneuve, as a wealthy matron, convinces us that the

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prime desirable state for women is slightly heavy middle age. Béart demonstrates amply that sexuality is more than a matter of bedrooms. Huppert has a romp as a prim bespectacled aunt: her performance shows us how an experienced woman can become a virgin. And Ardant brings a new burst of loveliness to the most complex character in the cast. What a good film to watch as one settles back after a good meal.

Before World War II, the Players Club in New York used to mount an annual Broadway production of a play for one week, a revival with a cast of famous actors who came together for the fun of it (and for a theater benefit). Presumably there was more than fun in it for the cast of *8 Women*: still, this constellation reminded me of those earlier ones. ■

Jed Perl on Art
After Disenchantment

FOR YEARS NOW, the art world has been adrift in sour disenchantment. The mood is nearly impossible to shake. Although gallerygoers are stirred by contemporary art and museumgoers are having extraordinary experiences, there is a widespread belief that nothing really adds up, either for the artists or for the audiences. No matter how eye-filling the experiences that people are having, those experiences can end up feeling disconnected, isolated, stripped of context and implication. The art may not disappoint, but there is so much disappointment and confusion built up around the very idea of art that people find themselves backing away from their own sensations.

There have been many attempts to diagnose the malaise that grips artists and audiences, but most of the diagnoses point to symptoms, not to causes. It is true that the blockbuster mentality in the big museums has a way of homogenizing experiences. And the icebox ambience in many of the new Chelsea galleries can leave even authentic work feeling artificial. But the uncertainty about the power of art goes much deeper; it has been internalized by artists and gallerygoers alike. People are still fired up about the best museum shows or about new work by artists whom they admire, but they may not know what to make of their feelings, and they cannot see how their experiences go together. This is where the trouble really begins. Experiences are shaped by the many ways in which they mirror and challenge and alter our expectations. And people who are unsure about what to expect from art are going to find that their experiences keep fizzling. The magic has not gone out of art, but there is little sense of how magical acts can add up to a magical atmosphere, and how that atmosphere can become a part of ordinary life.

Disenchantment has itself become a fashionable attitude. The people who cannot get from Experience A to Experience B have based an entire aesthetic on their inability to weave things together. Turn the pages of *Vitamin P: New Perspectives in Painting*, an ultra-hip anthology that has just been published by Phaidon, and you encounter a mood that tends to be hands-off, formulaic, and terminally ironic in the work of more than one hundred artists, some of whom are unfamiliar, some of whom are very familiar, such as Luc Tuymans, who specializes in wan, nearly monochromatic vignettes, and Elizabeth Peyton, who paints the youth of today with the manipulative sensitivity of a high school student on the make. The cream-colored cover of *Vitamin P* is decorated with tablet-shaped details from paintings. The message is that painting is good for you. *Vitamin P* is meant to be an optimistic book, but the artists and the critics involved carry such a baggage of stylish pessimism and are so determinedly post-everything that their plea for the re-enchantment of painting seems little more than another attitude.

The crowd that runs the art world is more or less dominated by the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren of the Dadaists. You have to give credit where credit is due. These people hold their current positions of power because they long ago saw which way the wind was blowing. You cannot argue with them when they tell you that the artist can no longer function as a romantic hero and that the audience no longer believes that art is the Holy Grail. The shrines in which the artists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries placed the things they loved—those shrines labeled "The Religion of Art" and "Art-for-Art's-Sake"—may charm us, but we do not really believe in them. Nobody any longer embraces art as a Quest or a Destiny. We may still refer to ourselves as romantics or say that we believe in art-for-art's-sake, but the sense of those attitudes as life-changing beliefs is impossible to sustain.

We risk turning art into camp when we insist too much on the old forms of artistic exaltation. The attitude of the connoisseur, when maintained in too defensive a way, as it has been by some neoconservative critics, can turn into a sort of kitsch attitude. Yet you can see why that risk might be worth taking, when so many of the alternatives seem to be based on the fixed assumption that art is nothing but a symptom or a by-product of a busy society. A cynical utilitarianism is surely more dangerous than a camp connoisseurship. Yet we may avoid the dangers of both positions if we argue that the magic of art is something that any reasonable, fully alive person must regard as among the necessities. (The title *Vitamin P*, implying that painting is part of a regimen, is itself a joke about the utilitarian view of art.) To argue that art is among the necessities is not to deny art its metaphors and its mysteries. Art is a parallel universe with its own narratives and conflicts and unities. And there is another sense in which art is a parallel universe, for the art of our time and our understanding of the art of the past are constantly being transformed, right along with the rest of our lives. To the extent that the ebb and flow of our feelings about art really matter, they will echo and animate our more general sense of things.

GALLERYGOERS, MUSEUMGOERS, curators, critics, and artists are glad to imagine that they have been disabused of every last illusion that ever clung to art, but deep down they may still crave the white-hot, crack-the-world-wide-open, near-apocalyptic excitement that the Romantics inaugurated and that the Dadaists toyed with, satirized, and rejected. I can see no other way to explain why so many people who are involved in the arts are so restless and uneasy, excited one minute, bored out of

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their minds the next. Wildly careening feelings are inherent in our experience of art, which is by its very nature unpredictable and explosive, but the audience's hyper mood may have less to do with what they are seeing than with their inability to make sense of what they are seeing. Critics will pay their respects to the kind of quiet yet intense approach to works of art that you see among the visitors to the shows of Old Master drawings that are regularly presented at the Frick Collection and the Morgan Library in New York, but such experiences are widely regarded as throwbacks, like going to a tea party. Worrying about nuances of sensibility is thought to be a specialized activity. Even the Drawing Center, the chic SoHo exhibition space that presents beautiful shows of works on paper—including, this past summer, "Tablet," Ellsworth Kelly's extraordinary gathering of his own visual notations and aide-mémoire—has an overly self-conscious ambience, as if the only reason to look at drawings very carefully is to prove that you are good as gold.

It has become almost a cliché among artists to observe that the critics are mostly interested in debuts and valedictions. The public is believed to want something new, or else something that is neatly enclosed, finished off. Development, with its irregular pace, its quickenings and slowdowns and advances and holding patterns and backslidings (which can turn out to be fresh discoveries), may remind the gallerygoing audience too much of the unpredictable rhythms of life itself. Galleries tend to embrace artists who have immediately evident profiles, who are sellers from the get-go. And there is a tendency to back away from the work of an artist almost as soon as it has been encountered. The impact of this attitude on artists in the first ten or fifteen years of their working lives can be extremely dangerous, for artists may feel some pressure to pull away from their truest instincts, to move too fast, to strike poses.

The artist who stays in the same place for more than an instant can be quickly rejected by an audience that confuses a natural evolution with immobility—and is primed for disappointment. Some might say that the ethereal imaginary landscapes with which the young painter Josh Dorman has emerged in the past few years have not suggested an evolution, but for the time being his willingness to stay in that dreamy space of his, and the ingenuity with which he works up his fey atmospheres, may be counted a kind of strength. There is something to be said for artists who do not rush in and out of things. The beginning of a painter's life may be a waiting game. That can also be true of the middle of an artist's career.

Artists are embraced fast and dropped even faster. Losing interest in last year's discoveries, even if they have already practically been declared modern masters, is so common as to scarcely inspire comment. Entire movements—the razzmatazz of Neo-expressionism, the arch attitudes of Post-Minimalism—simply vanish. And nobody looks back. If challenged, critics will say that the artists lost their edge. And if nobody even wonders at the speed with which their own favorite artists fizzle, surely it is because the audience assumes that artistic experiences have neither origins nor implications. (If the audience had real expectations, they might not have been bamboozled in the first place.) When an artist actually begins to build on what he or she has done, critics may feel that the artist is entangling them in some sort of unpleasantly personal matter. I have been interested to notice, in the past year or so, that some critics are beginning to back off from their initial admiration for the work of Jeremy Blake, whose DVD projections, with their full-blown color and surprising abstract movements, have already earned him a place in many museum surveys. The playfulness of Blake's fantasies, with their evocations of modern architecture and post-war Color Field and geometric painting, are that rare example of fast-track mainstream art that actually has some personal poetry. Recently Blake has been exploring the crannies of his imagination, indulging in a voluptuous, flowery feeling for Victorian follies. I would say that he is becoming more himself. His talent is losing its initial shock; he is asking the audience to commit. And that is precisely when they might just start to pull out.

Gallerygoers want somebody to make the commitment for them. Even the most independent-minded gallerygoers, who are skeptical about the Neo-Dadaist shenanigans in Chelsea, sometimes seem afraid to follow an artist's development. They may want to avoid the anxiety of having to make up their minds for themselves. That is why there is so much interest in exhibitions that focus on artists who are late in their careers or whose careers are over. I would be the last person to deny the interest of Jane Freilicher's delicate, quiveringly particular New York cityscapes (in an exhibition at the National Academy of Design over the summer), or of Leland Bell's grandly abbreviated figure compositions (in a small retrospective at the Salander-O'Reilly Galleries in September). Freilicher is still an artist in her prime; and at the time of his death in 1991 Bell was doing the best work of his career. But there can be something a little easy for the audience about admiring what amount to polished accomplishments. When gallerygoers hail a long-running career and admire the artist's courage in taking an independent stand, I am left wondering whether more energy should not be spent attending to the development of those who are still on their way—who are thirty-five or fifty-five. Jane Freilicher and Leland Bell have had their determined bands of supporters for decades now; some gallerygoers stood by these artists long before they could be cozied up to as old dears. It seems far easier to salute prickly survivors than a prickly mid-career artist or a prickly youth, if for no other reason than that the younger an artist is, the less sure you are of what he or she is going to amount to. Nostalgia and a reverence for tradition can be another way of processing disenchantment.

Art fills a need for surprise, for the unexpected. But some of the biggest surprises hit us slowly. They depend on nearly imperceptible shifts in feeling. The artist who has an outstanding show that is, in character and in quality, much like his or her last show may face indifference from the public. Such a reaction is unwarranted, for the artist who goes at the same thing in the same way and hits the same high points is achieving something, too. And sometimes, on second thought, gallerygoers may realize that the attack is slightly different. When you find yourself tuning into such distinctions, you can find that you are feeling especially alive. Yet when there is as much anxiety about the power of a personal response as there is right now, many museumgoers and gallerygoers may prefer to retreat to consensus thinking, which can be passed off as a kind of disinterestedness, although it could more accurately be described as a kind of indifference. The people with the strongest opinions are often all too quick to back off from those opinions. What we are in danger of forgetting is that the taste of a time is grounded in personal feelings. Those who refuse to be partisan are condemned to be trend spotters and market forecasters. Artists and audiences need once again to believe that the freestanding value of art liberates them to indulge in their own sensations. They need to be enchanted by their own experiences.

Art, I mean real art, has a freestanding power, it has meanings and qualities that inhere in its very forms; but we are also able to move freely around a work of art

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and approach it in any number of ways. There is an objectivity to art, but our relationship to that objectivity is exploratory, provisional, psychological. To speak of ordinariness or everydayness in relation to the experience of art is to suggest that part of the interest of art lies in how we can experience our own shifting thoughts and moods in relation to works of art—and in relation to the development of artistic careers. The disinterestedness of art frees us to react in a range of ways. The artist seeks to give a personal stamp to the objectivity of art, and the gallerygoer or the museumgoer works to understand that objectivity in his or her own way.

Quality and meaning in art are always a matter of working definitions, of evolving definitions, and for artists and audiences alike the constant adjustments of perceptions ought to be part of the normal unfolding of events. Works that riveted me when I was twenty still look marvelous, but they may not hold me in the same way. The architectural complexity of Poussin's canvases does not mesmerize me as it did when I was first beginning to understand the brilliance with which those structures are engineered. What most amazes me now is van Eyck's naturalism, with its combination of velvet and steel. I can't get enough of the unaffectedness of his virtuosity, of that scrupulousness that suggests modesty. Van Eyck and Poussin have not changed over the past thirty years, obviously; but my needs have changed. As for contemporary art, it may possess the power to create a need that we did not know we had. Certain works make a space for themselves, and this can take time. When I first saw R. B. Kitaj's *Greenwich Village* (1990–1993), this packed dreamscape seemed too much a collage of allegorical figures, each lost in his or her own fraught isolation; but the peculiarities of *Greenwich Village*, the very spatial illogic of the composition, have somehow become a knot with a convincing shape, and I now treasure the painting as an inscrutable image in the artist's private emblem book.

One of the problems with the old formalist argument that you can instantaneously grasp the integrity of a work of art is that it leaves the viewer in far too passive a position. While postmoderns argue that the artist and the audience are captives of the zeitgeist, traditionalists have their own way of denying the audience its freedom to choose, for according to the traditionalists we are all beholden to timeless values. But timeless values should not be a straitjacket. It is our responsibility to make sense of them. Three-quarters of a century ago, when Eliot argued that we must accept the impersonality of tradition, he was reacting to the ultra-personal extravagance of the Romantic artist who was always reaching for something larger, something louder. What Eliot could not perhaps accept was the extent to which the impersonality of art must be animated and colored by our almost helpless inclination to personalize a work of art. It is the constant experiencing of artistic forms, by artists and audiences alike, that gives those forms their particular aliveness at a particular time.

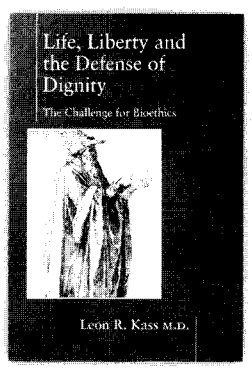
We still live in the morning after Romanticism. And we are still in the grips of a Romantic hangover, of a seemingly insatiable yearning for the total work of art, for the experience that pulls together all experience—an omni-experience. When people find something lacking in even the best contemporary painting and sculpture, they may actually be saddling this work with an unwarranted assumption, widespread today, that all major works of art are going to have the sort of pervasive impact, of seepage across the culture, that we know from some of our great experiences with popular art, with movies and music. Intellectuals often reserve a special fascination for artists who spill beyond the bounds of the medium and become figures in a broader social arena—figures such as Wagner and Whitman and the Picasso of *Guernica*. In an essay published in 1940, Auden observed that Wagner was "the forerunner, and in many ways the creator, of both the high-brow and the low-brow tastes of our time." (The essay, "Mimesis and Allegory," is included in Princeton University Press's new collection of Auden's *Prose, Volume II, 1939–1948*.) Auden observed that Wagner was a precursor of Mr. Goldwyn's showmanship, of Henry James's "subtle emotional nuances," and of "a taste for the Wurlitzer."

Many people still stand in awe of the artist who promises to be all things to all people. The huge, sometimes multimedia installations that are now so popular in galleries and museums aim to press all our buttons simultaneously, to give us omni-experiences. Artists such as Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst offer the fun of Disneyland-style environments, but they also expect us to have deep thoughts. They aim to combine the ultra-personal experience that is characteristic of painting and sculpture with the excitement of being part of a group experience that characterizes popular entertainment. The effect is to confound—and to disarm—the audience. The scale of their gallery and

Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity

The Challenge for Bioethics

By Leon R. Kass



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museum shows, and the elaborateness of their gadgetry, mimics popular entertainment, although the work of Koons and Hirst almost inevitably fails even in pop terms, because the processes by which it comes into being are not truly pitched to popular experience, and so the work remains a vacuous hybrid. But even many people who recognize the falsity of art-gallery giganticism cannot help being caught in the pop premise that big audiences necessarily make for big experiences.

It is the very essence of popular culture that the intense feelings that a song or a movie kicks off in us are, almost simultaneously, experienced by many other people. When a couple refers to "the summer we fell in love and everybody was playing our song," they are describing one of the essential pop experiences, the experience of the connectedness of the individual with the group. When pop is terrific—when *Sex and the City* is really clicking—the quality of the experience is magnified by our sense of how many people are experiencing the same thing. Among artists and audiences there is an assumption, often openly voiced, often silently implied, that if an art experience cannot spread like wildfire, then it is not really good—worse, that it is somehow undemocratic. I reject both claims. The idea behind great popular art may be that it goes to where the audience is living, that the artist finds some extraordinary way to be in sync with some large part of the public; but the fact is that much important art is concerned with the artist's most idiosyncratic feelings, with what the artist in his or her inwardness feels about a tradition. Such art is by its very nature intensely personal, sometimes to the point of obscurity. And the process by which such art finds its audience is naturally slow, incremental, irregular, unpredictable. The health of painting does not depend on huge audiences; a couple dozen people can sustain an artist's career. I am not thinking here only of modern art or of the avant-garde. Fouquet's illuminated pages and Poussin's allegories were meant to speak to minuscule audiences.

A HALF-CENTURY AGO, when Robert Rauschenberg announced his intention to work in the gap between art and life, his supporters believed that he was striking a blow against the insularity of art. In a sense they were not mistaken, for who can deny that Rauschenberg led the way to the funhouse museums of the past decade? If Thomas Krens, the director of the Guggenheim, ever gets his way and is allowed to erect a gargantuan Frank Gehry building at the bottom of Manhattan, one of the prime attractions is going to be a vast selection of works by Rauschenberg: the art world as a funhouse. This is generally presented as a kind of inevitability—as a necessary response to the end of the old religion of art. But surely the move into the gap between art and life can breed its own forms of obscurantism and insularity, for where that gap actually is and what can actually go on in it is so little subject to precedent or expectation or experience that the artist—or the arts administrator—becomes a kind of newfangled dictator. The most hidebound of Neoclassicists never exerted the kind of mind control that is exerted by the people who organize the big multimedia extravaganzas that now fill so many galleries and museums, where you are told which way to walk into the room and which way to walk out of it, where you are plunged into darkness for one minute or expected to stand still watching a video for fifteen minutes or forced to watch what's going on in four different directions all at once. The work doesn't affect you, it harasses you.

There remains a significant museum-going public that is perfectly aware that art is not life. But it is symptomatic of the current mood that artists and curators and gallerygoers find themselves defining art negatively. When we talk about what art is not, it is because the old positive definitions—the definitions of art as idea or ideal, as a religion or as an eternal principle or as an inviolable formal order—do not jibe with the immediacy of experience that we crave. Those variously Romantic or idealist definitions of art, which were evolving all through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were attempts to account for the intensity of our experiences. The great work of liberating art from its immediate obligations—as illustration, as moral, as propaganda—is reflected in the writings on art by Kant and Hegel and in such paintings as Monet's late studies of water lilies and Mondrian's most astringent abstractions of the 1920s. Those exalted ideas of art as a place apart have had their revolutionary impact, and we now find ourselves on the other side of the revolution. Art still has its freestanding value, but the idealist view of that value can make art feel too remote—as irrelevant as the "statuary, posed / For a vista in the Louvre" in Wallace Stevens's "Connoisseur of Chaos."

What we find ourselves craving now is art's immediacy, art's particularity. But how do you build an aesthetic out of immediacy and particularity? I think this is the question that haunts so many artists and gallerygoers and museumgoers. People are barely able to ask this question, much less answer it, and it is this inability that fuels the overwhelming sense of disenchantment that pervades every corner of the art world. The standard versions of postmodern aesthetics—the ones that have been erected in the wake of Duchamp and Warhol, and are premised on some sort of bizarre, almost nihilistic idealization of everyday objects—are certainly irrelevant. So are the utilitarian aesthetics that aim to make art a part of "everyday life." Perhaps it is the artists to whom we should be listening most closely now, beginning with the writings of twentieth-century painters—especially Matisse, Picasso, Braque, and Klee—who insisted on the concreteness of art's mysteries, and thereby laid the groundwork for any future aesthetic.

In the past couple of decades more and more artists have found that they are attracted to Braque's elliptical observations. They can see that Braque presents the enigmas of art not as something remote but as something intimate and urgent. In his notebooks, Braque observes that "emotion is neither added nor imi-

Pain Thinks of the Pale of Settlement

Pain thinks of the eyes open
& closed the forehead's dust the mouth
open and closed Pain thinks

of the arm the leg numb as soil
the breasts numb as soil Pain thinks
of ankle & wrist the shoulder

the palm spacious as milk
Pain thinks of the body's temple &
throat the fingers crowded

with repetition Pain thinks
of pedestal & ditch the extinguished
gaze the shoe the star

Pain thinks of the pale of settlement
the arid cloth the dirt
pointing away from the heart.

Laurie Lamon

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tated. It is the bud, the work is the blossoming." In Braque's writings the mysteries of art turn out to be organic processes—processes of growth and transformation. Here we may begin to see a way beyond our current impasse. Art's particularity and immediacy, as we experience them day by day, can become an imaginative complication of the most fundamental nature of experience, and in that sense they can bring ideas and ideals together. ■

Unions

By JAMES WOOD

Middlesex
by Jeffrey Eugenides

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 544 pp., $26)

IN HIS MEMOIR *The Noise of Time*, Mandelstam recalls a haughty friend who used to say, disdainfully, that "some men are books, others—newspapers." The remark might be adapted. Some books are books, others—newspapers. In recent years, the large American novel has frequently aspired to the condition of journalism. The great quarry of the last decade, and sometimes the great cemetery, has been the social novel, the vast report on the way we live now, the stuffed dossier, the thriving broadsheet streaming with contemporary brightnesses. Tom Wolfe's barely literate plea for more of just this kind of fiction has always seemed nonsensical in the age of Joyce Carol Oates, Philip Roth, Don DeLillo, Richard Powers, and most recently Jonathan Franzen. We have too much socially and politically obsessed fiction, not too little. Mimesis deserves a holiday. The bright book of life need not include *all* of life.

Jeffrey Eugenides's second novel seems, at first glance, a victim of this journalistic ambition to cover the twentieth-century American news. It is about three generations of a Greek-American family, and it moves from 1922 to the 1970s. We pass, as you would expect, through Prohibition, the Depression, World War II, and the civil rights movement, and we end with the OPEC oil crisis. There is even an opportunistic "update," in which the narrator glancingly mentions September 11, as if the failure to include that catastrophe would make the novel untimely or in some way obsolete.

In addition to this reportorial urge, *Middlesex* is a child of its moment in its occasional recourse to those excitements, patternings, and implausibilities that lie on the soft side of magical realism and should be called hysterical realism: two cousins conceive their children on the same night and at the same moment, and these two children later marry each other; a character is named Chapter Eleven and seems never to have been given any other name; the Greek lady who flees Smyrna in 1922 later retires to Smyrna Beach, Florida; the novel's hermaphrodite narrator, Calliope Stephanides, who is born a girl but later decides to be a boy (hence "middlesex"), conveniently moves to a house on Middlesex Street, in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, in the 1960s, and conveniently narrates his story from present-day Berlin, formerly a city of two halves or sexes (which, of course, he remarks upon)—and so on.

It seems hard to convince contemporary novelists that true aesthetic patterning has little to do with such gunning symmetries, but is more akin to the ghostlier ideal of musical motif and repetition. Still, these deformities notwithstanding, *Middlesex* is certainly a novel and not a newspaper; and it is an often affecting, funny, and deeply human book. For all its scope and its size, for all the data that crowds this novel, Eugenides seems a charmingly ingenuous writer. A comparison might be made with that other big American novel, *The Corrections*. Despite his considerable powers as a dramatist, Franzen rarely leaves himself at the door. He is an intensely knowing novelist, and his many essaylets and op-ed riffs are written in a high-journalistic prose, and clearly by Franzen himself; they could be broken off the main stem of the book and crumbled into *The New Yorker* without much amendment. Eugenides, too, enjoys his authorial jags, and some are better than others, but he generally avoids knowingness. His prosy riffs are his narrator's, and they belong jealously to his novel. They are more likable than Franzen's, if less obviously smart. Above all, they partake of his narrator's curious innocence.

THIS IS A way of saying that Eugenides at his best is a storyteller. Innocence in storytelling is a kind of learned cognitive naïveté, whereby the writer seems to discover each new detail synchronously with the reader. The narrator's revelation poses as self-revelation. This talent, actually very rare in contemporary novelists, is inseparable from a quality of epistemological delight, a joy in knowing. (Knowingness, by contrast, is joyless.) On the third page of the novel, the narrator's brother is sent upstairs to the attic where his grandparents live in the family home. The attic of Desdemona and "Lefty" Stephanides, grandparents of Chapter Eleven and Calliope Stephanides, is a curious one, stuffed as it is with the physical reminders of the old Greek world they left behind in 1922. But the reader does not know this yet. And so he must follow the novelist:

> In sneakers he passed beneath the twelve, damply newspapered birdcages suspended from the rafters. With a brave face he immersed himself in the sour odor of the parakeets, and in my grandparents' own particular aroma, a mixture of mothballs and hashish. He negotiated his way past my grandfather's book-piled desk and his collection of rebetika records. Finally, bumping into the leather ottoman and the circular coffee table made of brass, he found my grandparents' bed and, under it, the silkworm box. Carved from olivewood, a little bigger than a shoe box, it had a tin lid perforated by tiny airholes and inset with the icon of an unrecognizable saint. The saint's face had been rubbed off, but the fingers of his right hand were raised to bless a short, purple, terrifically self-confident-looking mulberry tree. After gazing awhile at this vivid botanical presence, Chapter Eleven pulled the box from under the bed and opened it. Inside were the two wedding crowns made from rope and, coiled like snakes, the two long braids of hair, each tied with a crumbling black ribbon. He poked one of the braids with his index finger. Just then a parakeet squawked, making my brother jump, and he closed the box, tucked it under his arm, and carried it downstairs to Desdemona.

The reader instantly recognizes that he is in the presence of a real storyteller,

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whose admirable desire is to goad our tactilities. There is much confidence, dash, and charm in this little passage. First, the oddity of the objects themselves: the parakeets, the silkworm box, the wedding crowns of rope, the braids of hair. Next, the precision of the writing: exactly "twelve" birdcages, which are "damply newspapered"; the odor of "mothballs and hashish"; the box of olivewood and its perforated tin lid. And finally, the passage's charm: the little boy's domestic terror, the thick gloom or hideous mess of the room nicely suggested by that comical verb "found" ("he found my grandparents' bed"), and the delighted smirk that runs beneath the description of the priest on the box blessing the "short, purple, terrifically self-confident-looking mulberry tree." (The mulberry tree, remember, provides the silkworm with its home.)

MUCH OF EUGENIDES'S comic charm resides in, and flows from, his loyalty to his Greek-American background. If he has a curiosity that seems sweeter than the average postmodern writer, the run-of-the-mill I.Q.-with-an-iBook, it may have something to do with a willingness to let his ethnic material speak for itself. Certainly, although his novel is blemished by elements of didacticism and prolixity, and he is not without the postmodern urge to turn clouds of suggestion into storms of fact, Eugenides has a simple confidence in his Greek material that disarms his vices. He approaches his Greek-American immigrants without overweening mediation, as if these people have not been described very much until now. The result is usually a descriptive immediacy, vividly comic, often precisely realistic, but with that tilt of the real that narrative needs.

Thus we meet Desdemona Stephanides, who with her husband flees the Turks in Smyrna in 1922 and arrives in Detroit, where she has cousins. Desdemona, a formidable creature, has the habit of fanning herself when she gets angry or excited. "To anyone who never personally experienced it, it's difficult to describe the ominous, storm-gathering quality of my grandmother's fanning," says Calliope, her granddaughter and the book's narrator. And Desdemona's fans, it should be said, are eccentric: "the front of the fan was emblazoned with the words 'Turkish Atrocities.' Below, in smaller print, were the specifics: the 1955 pogrom in Istanbul in which 15 Greeks were killed, 200 Greek women raped, 4,348 stores looted, 59 Orthodox churches destroyed, and even the graves of the Patriarchs desecrated." Again, it is not only the verve of the writing that appeals, but its exactness. The idea of an "atrocity fan" is wonderful enough, but Eugenides's real talent lies in the detailed coda to this passage: "Desdemona had six atrocity fans. They were a collector's set. Each year she sent a contribution to the Patriarchate in Constantinople, and a few weeks later a new fan arrived, making claims of genocide and, in one case, bearing a photograph of Patriarch Athenagoras in the ruins of a looted cathedral." This is the kind of detail that *makes* narrative.

In addition to Desdemona, there is her husband Eleutherios, or "Lefty," who opens a speakeasy (later a diner) called The Zebra Room, and whose son Milton (Calliope's father) becomes a successful businessman, as the founder of Hercules Hot Dogs. Milton is a limited fellow, an instinctive American patriot and a Nixon supporter. Unlike his wife Tessie, he does not go to the local church, the Assumption Greek Orthodox, "having become an apostate at the age of eight over the exorbitant price of votive candles." Calliope often mocks her father, for the reader's benefit: "The only way my father could think of to instill in me a sense of my heritage was to take me to dubbed Italian versions of the ancient Greek myths." And there is Peter Tatakis, "Uncle Pete" as he is known, a proponent of the Great Books series, a collection of one hundred fifty world masterpieces (he has read them all twice). In the old country Uncle Pete had wanted to be a doctor, but the "catastrophe"—the flight from the Turks—ended that. "In the United States, he'd put himself through two years of chiropractic school, and now ran a small office in Birmingham with a human skeleton he was still paying for in installments."

IN GENERAL, EUGENIDES'S gift is for summation, for gargoyles rather than architecture. His characters tend to be introduced in blocks of description, which turn out to house their somewhat stable essences. It might be said that most of his Greek characters resemble each other—namely, that they all partake of the same kind of voluble Greekness, an ethnic robustness that skirts caricature. When Calliope tells us that throughout her childhood the slightest mention of the Depression would set Desdemona off "into a full cycle of wailing and breast-clutching," and that even the phrase "manic depression" once had this effect, we are being handed, too liberally and easily, a melodramatic essence, the fat wailing granny from the old country. In such cases, as so often in melodrama (in Babel's Cossacks, for instance), the complexities of characters are sacrificed on the altar of "vividness," and are simplified into mere appetite, which then becomes those characters' supposedly signal, but actually quite generic, attribute.

Eugenides often coaxes his Greek material; but in this regard he only coasts on it, as in a rather glib line like "every Greek drama needs a deus ex machina." Indeed, there are times when he comes close to the comedian's one-liner: "Easter Sunday, 1959. Our religion's adherence to the Julian calendar has once again left us out of sync with the neighborhood." The ecclesiastical reliably brings out the joker in Eugenides: "As far as I could tell, what happened every Sunday at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church was that the priests got together and read the Bible out loud. They started with Genesis and kept going straight through Numbers and Deuteronomy. Then on through Psalms and Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, all the way up to the New Testament. Then they read that. Given the length of our services, I saw no other possibility."

If his people sound a little alike, they are ably diversified by the many lanes of the novel's effluviating plot. *Middlesex* is an enormously ambitious book, whose many stories do indeed gather to present a broad swath of Greek-American life. More, Eugenides wishes to use his three-generational structure to suggest something about fate, the bequeathments of genetics, and the possibility of revolt once fate has displayed its cards. To carry this thematic weight, he has chosen a very peculiar vehicle: his narrator's hermaphroditism. Desdemona and Lefty, we quickly learn, are brother and sister. Back in Bithynios, their tiny village in Asia Minor on the slopes of Mount Olympus, the parentless siblings began their incestuous affair on the crooked logic that although they were brother and sister, they were also third cousins, and cousins marry all the time. The relationship is jolted into hasty marriage by world events: suddenly the Turks are at their door and they must flee Smyrna, which is on fire. They marry on the boat to America, and pledge to keep their secret a secret.

It is hard not to admire the vigor with which Eugenides writes about Bithynios, and then about the sack of Smyrna. (It also allows him cheekily to quote from *The Waste Land*: "Mr Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant/unshaven, with a pocketful of currants ...") As Smyrna burns, the huddled citizens wait on the harborfront to be collected by anyone who will have them. A British frigate, anchored just offshore, makes no charitable gesture. Des-

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demona and Lefty, along with an Armenian doctor named Nishan Philobosian, are rescued by the French. A stirring epic froths forward. But what Eugenides gains in scope he loses in precision. A scene set on the British ship, in which fatuous officers scan the harborfront with binoculars and calmly say to each other, "Jolly crowded, what?" and "Nice cigar, what?" is cartoonish, an impression hardly helped by Eugenides's odd decision to have a "Major" (an army rank) on a naval boat, and to call the Royal Navy "His Majesty's Marines," whoever they were.

BUT ONCE THE novel arrives in America, it gains authenticity from the community in which Desdemona and Lefty live. They share a house in Detroit with another cousin, Sourmelina Zizmo. Lefty briefly works in the local Ford factory, then as a bootlegger for Sourmelina's husband, Jimmy. Sourmelina and Desdemona become pregnant on the same night, and give birth, respectively, to a daughter, Theodora (Tessie), and a son, Miltiades (Milton). When Jimmy dies, Lefty opens The Zebra Room, which in time will become a successful diner, until it falls victim to the Detroit riots of 1967. (Detroit's fires repeat, in American guise, the blazes of Smyrna.)

Meanwhile heredity advances with silent footfall. Desdemona is terrified that her incestuously conceived son Milton will be retarded or handicapped. He is neither, but he is carrying an invisible flaw, a mutation of the fifth chromosome—that is, hermaphroditism, a genetic oddity common in Bithynios, where for centuries families had intermarried. It is dormant until Milton marries Tessie, Sourmelina's daughter, also his cousin, who is carrying the same genetic flaw. Milton and Tessie's first child, Chapter Eleven, is unblemished. But their second, Calliope Stephanides, born in 1960, is a hermaphrodite, or more exactly a little girl who possesses recessed and barely visible male genitals, a victim of "5-alpha-reductase deficiency syndrome." An alert obstetrician might have noticed the tiny deformity, but Calliope was delivered by Dr. Philobosian, the Armenian refugee from Smyrna, now seventy-four and a little dithery.

Calliope maps the entanglements of her family inheritance with characteristic jollity. "So, to recap," begins one chapter. "Sourmelina Zizmo (née Pappasdiamondopoulis) wasn't only my first cousin twice removed. She was also my grandmother. My father was his own mother's (and father's) nephew. In addition to being my grandparents, Desdemona and Lefty were my great-aunt and -uncle. My parents were my second cousins and Chapter Eleven was my third cousin as well as my brother." Eugenides uses this genetic spaghetti as a way to embody, literally, the sentence of a family fate. Calliope, who in the magical realist mode is able to recount not only her birth but also her pre-history back to Bithynios, cannily ponders this burden, and how to outwit it. At times too cannily: we hear about how "in the twentieth century, genetics brought the Ancient Greek notion of fate into our very cells," but that in the twenty-first century we have discovered that a surprisingly small number of genes actually determine our behavior. "And so a strange new possibility is arising. Compromised, indefinite, sketchy, but not entirely obliterated: free will is making a comeback."

The book clearly turns on this idea of destiny, and of destiny resisted, both by free will and by helpless action: first when Desdemona and Lefty have their lives changed and in turn change their lives by coming to America, and then when their granddaughter chooses, at the age of thirteen, to become a boy. Calliope, we are supposed to believe, is the synthesis that unites the restless dialectic of eros, and perhaps of history: a character neatly informs us that "Plato said that the original human being was a hermaphrodite. Did you know that? The original person was two halves, one male, one female. Then these got separated. That's why everybody's always searching for their other half. Except for us. We've got both halves already."

Whenever Eugenides presses on his themes this way, he bruises them; he stops trusting in his tale, apparently unaware that its very form incarnates its theme better than can any commentary. Alas, we are in a journalistically essayistic age, when a necessary component of a serious novel is thought to be a theoretical discussion of what the book is about. It is easy to forget that in fiction themes ideally mature like aloes, losing their stems as soon as they blossom; that is to say, themes need to forget themselves in the mind of the novel, need to break free of their beginnings. Eugenides is rather fond of reminding us just how neatly he has planted everything.

Yet once again Eugenides's charm, his life-jammed comedy, rescues the novel from its occasional didacticism. One can put it this way: a novel narrated by a hermaphrodite comes to seem largely routine, as if Calliope were simply rather fat or tall. A fact that might scream its oddity, and that might have been used again and again heavily to explore fashionable questions of identity and gender, is here blissfully domesticated. This Eugenides achieves by a patient and often funny adherence to the ordinary, which was exactly how he made the peculiar material of his last novel, *The Virgin Suicides*, seem just regularly suburban, Cheever-stamped fare. In short, Eugenides makes Calliope credible: she is not merely a theme (though she may sometimes be thematically used and abused, poor girl), but a high-spirited high school girl growing up in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. Paradoxically, Eugenides's boldness, his decision to risk an emblem as obvious as a hermaphrodite narrator (an emblem, that is, of helpless destiny), is what steers the novel away, finally, from the temptation of editorial writing.

CALLIOPE MAY WELL be emblematic; but she is above all a hermaphrodite. One is reminded of Eudora Welty's crack that Melville needed a symbol so large and so real that it really had to be a whale. In some similar way, Eugenides's narrator, the product of many confused historical threads, had to be very, very confused. But the novel is helped enormously by Calliope's likability. Long before she is born and appears properly in the novel (about page 215), we know her voice, because she has been telling us the history of her parents and her grandparents. So once she is installed in the book we are happy to follow her, from her baptism (she urinates on the priest) to her familial removal to the house on Middlesex Street and her enrollment at the fancy Baker and Inglis School for Girls at the age of twelve.

At school she falls in love with another girl: Eugenides has an interesting skill for evoking the love-thick air of teenage schoolrooms. In the math teacher's room, for instance, we are told that "a picture of the great mathematician Ramanujan (whom we girls at first took to be Miss Grotowski's boyfriend) hangs on the wall." A trip with the Love Object (as Calliope refers to her) to a bayside house yields some very good writing, though always strict and precise: "Out in front of us the bay flashed silver. The bay had scales, like the fish beneath." And so Calliope grows up—until the moment when, in part because of her affair with the Love Object, she discovers that she is not a girl, or not only one.

And then the skies come down, in Greek fashion. Her parents take her to New York to a specialist called Dr. Luce, a marvelously trendy, early-1970s figure, a slightly shady pioneer just breaking the newly fertile crust of "sexology." Calliope runs away and has many adventures, and while she is missing, her father Milton, founder

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of Hercules Hot Dogs, dies in very strange circumstances that involve the local priest, Father Mike. The novel ends with his funeral, somberly. But the book's merriness cannot be suppressed, and the residue that the comic spirit leaves behind gleams with energy. Perhaps the funniest of many delightful episodes in the novel involves the visit of Dr. Müller, a nutritionist, to the Stephanides home. Dr Müller is doing a longevity study, and is writing an article on "The Mediterranean Diet." He is impressed by Desdemona's great age, and "to that end, he plied her with questions about the cuisine of her homeland.

> German by blood, he renounced his race when it came to its cooking. With postwar guilt, he decried bratwurst, sauerbraten, and Königsberger Klopse as dishes verging on poison. They were the Hitler of foods. Instead he looked to our own Greek diet ... as potential curatives, as life-giving, artery-cleansing, skin-smoothing wonder drugs. And what Dr. Müller said seemed to be true: though he was only forty-two, his face was wrinkled, burdened with jowls. Gray hair prickled up on the sides of his head; whereas my father, at forty-eight, despite the coffee stains beneath his eyes, was still the possessor of an unlined olive complexion and a rich, glossy, black head of hair. They didn't call it Grecian Formula for nothing. It was in our food!

The doctor shows the family the graphs that he has made, listing names and birthdates of Italians, Greeks, and a single Bulgarian living in the Detroit area. The doctor thinks that Desdemona is ninety-one. The family does not mention that "Desdemona was actually seventy-one, not ninety-one, and that she always confused sevens with nines.... We couldn't. We didn't want to lose out to the Italians or even that one Bulgarian."

This is characteristic of the novel's high-spirited, Greek-obsessed, ethnically competitive clan. And it is characteristic, too, of Eugenides's conjuring of childish innocence. He has accomplished one of the most difficult novelistic tricks: an adult voice using the full resources of the language and the proper prestiges of adulthood (Calliope is recalling his story as a middle-aged man now living in Berlin) that is simultaneously a child's voice, representing an excited, receptive, and bolting response to the world. Eugenides successfully combines the two visions, and so the book is joyously Calliope's. In our day, this achievement of a mature uncorruptedness represents something of a triumph. ■

On Fire With Longing

By PETER GREEN

If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho translated by Anne Carson

(Alfred A. Knopf, 397 pp., $27.50)

Sappho: Poems and Fragments translated by Stanley Lombardo

(Hackett, 68 pp., $27.95)

I.

SAPPHO, LIKE SHAKESPEARE, has a remarkable way of attracting idolaters, pseudo-moralists, spinmeisters (mostly with a sexual agenda), and a wide range of crackpot theorists, ranging from the benignly dotty to the angrily obsessive. Her case has also been taken up ferociously by serious feminists of just about every persuasion. It may be appropriate, therefore, and also prudent, if I begin by declaring my own interests and beliefs in the matter of this remarkable archaic Greek poet, about whom so extraordinarily little is known with certainty, and of whose work so pitifully little survives, largely on tattered and lacunose scraps of Egyptian papyrus.

In the early 1960s I lived on Lesbos, Sappho's island, for more than three years. This brought me a close acquaintance with its landscape, its flora, and its often violent climate; and it also made it very clear to me that these had not changed in essence since Sappho's sharp eye observed them. The gale-force winds that she saw attacking mountain oaks (neither of the translations under review gets this fragment quite right), and used as an image for the love that shook her heart, were all too familiar to me in winter. Not for nothing did so many of the houses in my village have steel shutters. And I shall never forget the magical evening when—just after sunset, as Sappho wrote—an unearthly glimmer manifested itself over the Lepetymnos mountain range in the east, radiant streaks of pinkish iridescence, and the moon silently swung up into the clear Aegean sky, *brododactylos*, or rosy-fingered, if ever a moon was. The epithet, perkily borrowed by Sappho from Homer and re-applied, has called up a lot of labored, and unnecessary, literary criticism. Sappho was simply describing what she knew, what she had seen.

But the island, or its most famous ghost, also had a very direct and practical impact on me. I had come there as a self-employed writer and translator with a tight schedule of work for the year ahead. Soon after my arrival, there marched into my dreams, totally disrupting my routine, this small, witty, passionate, brilliant woman from antiquity, with a temperament and an ego that would not take no for an answer; and she proceeded to dictate the story of her life to me. Other commitments were shunted aside. The dictation lasted, appropriately, almost nine months, and the result was a first-person novel, *The Laughter of Aphrodite*, to the authorship of which I have always felt I have no more than a very dubious claim. Disconcertingly, but not to my complete surprise, the physical picture that this Sappho presented in my mind was quite strikingly like the one attributed portrait of her, a mosaic from Sparta that I had not yet seen, for the good reason that it had not yet been discovered.

Psychologists would doubtless come up with a pat and platitudinous explanation for my experience of ghostly possession, and they would probably be right. All I can be certain of is the effect on me. They would point at once to my early and very rigorous grounding in Greek and Latin, at school and subsequently in postwar Cambridge, where I studied the early Greek lyric poets, Sappho included, with that most exacting of taskmasters, Denys Page, Regius Professor and subsequent author, with Edgar Lobel, of *Poetarum*

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Lesbiorum Fragmenta (1955), the standard text of Sappho and her fellow islander Alcaeus. I did not find Page congenial, and shared the opinion of those who felt that he ignored the literary substance of the poetry that he was editing at the expense of narrow textual criticism. This arrogant affectation he inherited from A. E. Housman, with the difference that Housman, a fine poet himself, brought an exquisite judgment to exegesis and emendation, whereas Page (who, as one critic remarked, would have made a good lawyer) had a tin ear for literary nuance of any sort.

Still, he did instill in me a sharp respect for the actual texts of ancient authors, and for the clear limits on what could be done with them in the way of reconstruction. This was particularly important with regard to Sappho. Antiquity knew nine books (that is, papyrus rolls) of her collected works, each containing an average of sixty to seventy poems. Today we have only one complete poem (the famous "Ode to Aphrodite"); one nearly complete poem (the passionately aroused observation of a girl sitting and laughing with a man, mischievously adapted by Catullus as the first shot in his pursuit of Lesbia/Clodia); and about two hundred fragments, some of them splinter-short quotations by ancient grammarians, others battered scraps on papyrus, from a few broken stanzas to isolated words, rescued from the rubbish-dumps of Egypt. It is impossible for anybody struck by the quality and the originality of what has survived not to rage helplessly at the almost total loss of what may well have been one of the greatest lyric poets of all time. The temptation to fill in gaps can be overwhelming; but as Page well knew, it has to be kept under very strict control.

Owing to all this, I have a close familiarity not only with the Greek text of Sappho, but also with the attempts, sometimes disastrous, that have been made to reconstruct it. In particular, there is the case of J. M. Edmonds, editor of *Lyra Graeca*, for most of the past century the Loeb Classical Library's bilingual text of early Greek lyric poetry, Sappho included. Edmonds, like nature, abhorred a vacuum, especially when it showed up as a lacuna in one of his favorite poets. So thoroughgoing, in fact, was his urge to fill in the gaps that he was known, jokingly, among his fellow scholars as the only archaic Greek poet with a twentieth-century *floruit*. To be fair, he put up warning signs: his lengthy supplements were prefaced, in translation, with the note "e.g.," and printed in italics with a vertical line beside them. But since these tended to say exactly what romantic aficionados of Sappho found most congenial, they were liable to be absorbed, often unconsciously, into the general picture. Nonclassical translators, who inevitably used the Loeb bilingual as their text, and whose knowledge of Greek textual criticism (or, indeed, of Greek) ran a poor second to their urge to put a recognizable and appealing Sappho on the contemporary literary map, cheerfully included many of Edmonds's supplements as though they were Sappho's own Greek.

Mosaic portrait of Sappho, circa 300 C.E., found in Sparta

The situation has improved a great deal in the last few years; but Edmonds's ghost has not been wholly exorcised from the popular view. This is a phenomenon with which I have very little patience. I am not opposed to supplements and emendations altogether. Properly controlled, they form an essential part of textual criticism, and can genuinely improve a text, either by correcting scribal errors or by filling in a limited gap where context and syntax make the supplement highly probable. But to go beyond these functions takes one into the slippery territory of pastiche, if not of forgery; and if there is anything that the recent history of forgery has taught us (I am thinking in particular of Van Meegeren's faked Vermeers), it is that a generation later any pastiche, however convincing it may be at the time, is indelibly stamped with the idiosyncrasies of its own day rather than those of the original that it sets out to imitate. Edmonds's Sappho comes across as a Victorian fin-de-siècle writer with a dash of H. D. and Vita Sackville-West. The lesson, I am glad to note, has not been lost on his successors.

Finally, of course, I must make my position clear regarding Sappho's social and erotic orientation, insofar as they are determinable from our highly inadequate evidence. This means, in the first instance, consciously discarding all the ingrained moral assumptions that one has inherited from two millennia of the Judeo-Christian tradition, not to mention what Jim Powell, in the bibliographical note to his own translation, *Sappho: A Garland* (1993), well describes as "centuries of scholarly prudery, misogyny, and homophobia." At the same time, however paradoxically, we also need to clear our minds of the clamorous new ideologies, from post-colonialism to post-structuralism, from political feminism to queer theory, that have been busily putting their own enthusiastic spin on Sappho and her world in a vigorous campaign of appropriation.

What follows, then, is an attempt to read the evidence independently. I should perhaps add that experience and study have brought me to two firm conclusions about human erotic responses: first, that to a greater or (more commonly) a lesser degree, all individuals are capable of being moved erotically by both sexes; and second, that while they have a choice as regards their sexual actions, their sexual preferences are innate, as much a part of their original genetic makeup as left-

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handedness or a flair for mathematics. Social conditioning (often much overtouted in this respect) can at best enhance or discourage these instincts, but it cannot change or reverse them. Or so I believe. Nothing that I have found in Sappho's poetry or world militates against these conclusions.

II.

THE FIRST IMPRESSION, the strongest impression, that a survey of Sappho's surviving work always leaves on me is of an aristocratic culture blithely confident in its own god-given status; as skilled in music, poetry, and dance as any occupant of an eighteenth-century drawing room; and very conscious, in a sophisticated way, of what Robert Herrick saw as the seductive qualities afforded by "a sweet disorder in the dress": "[Gongyla's] attire fluttered you when you saw it," Abanthis is reminded. And the dress, like the loved one, must be top-drawer: "What country hoyden has you spell-bound," snaps Sappho at her detested rival Andromeda, "wearing country clothes, too ignorant to pull down her ragged skirts over her ankles?" (Stanley Lombardo has her bizarrely "draped in burlap," and for Anne Carson her fault is "not knowing how to pull the cloth to her ankles.") One wealthy but uncultured woman gets the full blast of her scorn: "When *you're* dead you'll just lie there, no one thereafter will remember or miss *you*, for you have no part in the roses of Pieria [the birthplace of the Muses]."

The social upheavals of archaic Lesbos, the anti-aristocratic regimes of new men such as Pittakos or Myrsilos, impinge on this culture—we know from the Parian Marble that Sappho was temporarily exiled to Sicily, apparently for political resistance—but they leave surprisingly little trace in what we have of her poetry. (Alcaeus is far more forthcoming.) In fragment 98b (I use the generally accepted Lobel-Page numeration), she apologizes to her daughter Kleïs for not being able to provide her with an embroidered headband (Carson calls it a "spangled headbinder"), while lamenting the exile of one of the island's noble families; but otherwise these class battles seem to have had rather less effect on her than the Napoleonic wars did on Jane Austen.

What we find instead is the single-minded cultivation of sensibility by what remains in every sense a leisure class of hedonistic elitists. (This, I emphasize, is a descriptive assessment, not a moral judgment.) The hedonism is wholly innocent of any feelings of sin in the modern sense; and according to their conviction, modern readers find this either refreshing or an embarrassment. Hence the urgent and divergent efforts to present Sappho, variously, as the chaste headmistress of a finishing school (a view that was very popular, for some reason, with old-fashioned German academics), or as a taboo-breaking, anti-patriarchal lesbian pioneer, a Daughter of Bilitis *avant la lettre.*

Neither of these portraits has all that much to commend it. The first interpretation, it is true, got a boost in 1974 from the publication of a papyrus fragment identified as a commentary on Sappho, in which she was described as "peaceably instructing aristocratic girls not only from local families but also from those in Ionia"; but then no one had really doubted the existence of her wide circle of *jeunes filles en fleur*, nor of the "House of the Muses" that formed its center. It was the nature of Sappho's relationship with them that got strait-laced folk hot under the collar. They could always get around unambiguous erotic declarations, of course, by playing the persona card; that is, by claiming that the words in question must have been put in the mouth of a fictitious character. For the modernists and the same-sex advocates, on the other hand, all such statements—and there are a lot of them—are unassailable autobiography.

WHERE, THEN, DOES the truth lie? And is the truth even recoverable? It is a fact well known to pollsters and social scientists that people are more prone to lie, to fantasize, to deny, or to exaggerate when quizzed about their sexual life than when responding on any other topic. It is thus impossible to construct an accurate picture of their erotic activities (something that should have given Alfred Kinsey pause). On the other hand, a skillful examination of people's views on seemingly unrelated matters often reveals a very clear pattern of emotional—and erotic—preferences. The application of these techniques to Sappho's surviving work produces some very interesting results. Not surprisingly, personal relationships easily top the list, with unambiguous declarations of passionate devotion between the speaker and a variety of charmingly named girls as their most obvious motif. Yet hardly less frequent are the celebrations of marriage, the wedding songs. How are we to explain this?

Next in frequency come two equally suggestive categories. First, we have the Sapphic reproaches: the speaker is forever complaining and upbraiding, mostly regarding infidelity on the part of her lovers. Second, and even more intriguing, there is the regular communion with a variety of deities, Aphrodite above all, who are chatted to as though they were equals, and constantly invited to come and help, or to discuss things with, the speaker. The relationship seems intimate, even cozy: the invitations might almost be to a tea party. Aristocratic self-assurance could hardly go further. Scholarly attempts to normalize this odd habit by sticking a literary label on it (the appeals are sometimes called "kletic hymns") lack conviction. I am reminded of that topos popular with Roman poets such as Catullus, which laments the fact that the gods in an irreligious age no longer come down and consort with mortals. In Sappho we catch a glimpse of the good old days when they did. The list is rounded off with reflections on evanescent youth and the penalties of age, praise for aspects of the good life, snapshots of island scenery, and a handful of sage aphorisms.

SO WHAT CAN we learn from all this that we did not know already? The one intact poem is a good place to start. The speaker, identified as Sappho herself by her divine interlocutress, is appealing to Aphrodite to assist her, as she has done on previous occasions. The goddess, who clearly knows just what to expect and is amused by it, is reported as having inquired earlier, in effect: "What? *Again*? What is it *this* time? One more reluctant girl you want me to make fall for you? Another cooled-off lover you'd like *rechauffée*? All right: I'll do it. The pursued will become the pursuer, she'll shower you with gifts instead of refusing yours, she'll love you willy-nilly. Don't say you haven't been warned." Quite apart from making Sappho's homoerotic interests as clear as anyone could hope for, this declaration is most remarkable for the fact that it was Sappho herself who wrote it. Mischievous ironic self-deflation could scarcely go further: the wry humor puts me in mind of Dorothy Parker.

This view, first propounded by Denys Page in *Sappho and Alcaeus* (1955), has not proved popular. Sappho's most ardent admirers are disinclined to credit her with self-deprecating wit. I suspect it undermines the romantic image. This may also be the reason why the attributed mosaic portrait that I mentioned earlier is so seldom reproduced: not to put too fine a point on it, the severe parting and melon-style coiffure make Sappho look like a

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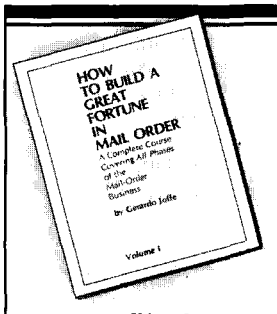
classic bun-faced hausfrau, which I suspect may come very close to the truth. (It turned up, piquantly, beside one of Alcibiades, also attributed, that made the raffish *Wunderkind* look like Byron after a week on the tiles.) But then nobody is over-anxious to stress the Oxyrhynchus papyrus—confirmed in detail by Ovid—which says, unequivocally: "She seems to have been negligible in appearance and indeed most ill-favored, being dark-complexioned and of extremely small height." ("I don't expect to touch the sky," she muses in one line; and the knowledge of her diminutive stature makes the words unexpectedly moving.) The evidence is beginning to suggest a very real and recognizable character, but not one with which most of Sappho's aficionados would seem to feel very comfortable.

The declarations of love are numerous, passionate, and unmistakable. Sappho cheerfully sidelines the masculine ideal of military glory in favor of personal devotion, using Helen of Troy's lovesick escapade to highlight her own yearning for the absent Anactoria, "whose lovely walk and sparkling expression I'd rather see than all the Lydians' chariots and armed infantry." "When I look at you, face to face," she says in another fragment, "not even Hermione [Helen's daughter] seems your equal"; and the tattered text talks (a suggestive echo here of the prayer to Aphrodite) of the speaker being freed from her cares, and of staying awake all night. (The fourth-century C.E. scholar Libanius cited Sappho as praying that her night might be made twice as long: he does not say why, and we can only guess.) "I long and yearn," she says in fragment 36, and "Love shook my wits like a gale" in fragment 47. The emperor Julian quotes her in a letter: "You came, and I was yearning for you; you cooled my mind which was on fire with longing." As so often, we learn the condition but not its object.

Love is bittersweet, irresistible, turns limbs to water (fragment 130). It also has a mayfly quality, is transient, easily lost, too often a thing of the past. One dominant emotion in these fragments is nostalgia: "I loved you once, Atthis, long ago..." matches the wistful reflection "For we too did these things in our youth." There are breakups with tears and reminders of past pleasures (fragment 94). One much-tattered scrap (fragment 58) reveals complaints about white hair, withered skin, knees that no longer respond in the dance like fawns; but suddenly, briefly, clears with the unforgettable claim: "This too love has granted me, the brightness and beauty of the sun." But there was a price to pay. Within that close circle of intimates, affairs seem to have been intense and varied, but brief: the impression one gets is of favorites flitting from flower to flower, like Pindar's bee. "Atthis, to think of me has become hateful to you, and you fly to Andromeda." Pleistidica and Gongyla will be known, Sappho observes bitchily, as wives ("yoke-mates") of Gorgo. The latter, like Andromeda, is one of her pet hates: she refers, with nice ambiguity, to those "who have had a surfeit of Gorgo." I loved you but you got bored with me: this is a recurring theme.

Yet this entire world, with its passions and its sensitivities ("I adore the exquisite," Sappho declares), was an Eden from which expulsion came with marriage, and thus in a sense it matched the equally temporary and equally intense world of the adolescent *eromenos*, or boy love, in classical Athens, who with the onset of a beard graduated to the role of *erastes* (adult lover) and began to look for an *eromenos* of his own. Sappho's wedding songs are at least as much elegies of loss as celebratory rites of passage. Regret for lost virginity is a recurrent motif. Sappho recognizes the emotional longings driving young girls to marriage ("Sweet mother, I cannot weave my web, I'm overpowered by desire for a boy because of tender Aphrodite"), just as she must have known, all too well, the social and financial advantages of marital status. The alternative occupations in most of Greece—whore or downtrodden spinster—were not attractive. If the topmost apple on the tree was left too long, it withered and fell. But there were also—even on Lesbos, where the status of women was exceptionally high—the usual family pressures and male self-assertion: no wife was wholly free.

Above all, there remained the brutal fact, universal in the ancient world, that the occupation of wife was, largely on account of primitive hygiene and obstetrics, a higher-risk occupation than the occupation of soldier. Euripides's Medea delivers a stinging summation of a woman's vulnerability in wedlock, ending with the flat claim that she would rather fight three frontline engagements than give birth once. It was a far from unreasonable preference. Every bride knew that taking a husband, however considerate, meant accepting heavy odds in favor of an early and probably agonizing death in, or as a result of, childbirth. One fragment (44A(a), probably, but not certainly, Sappho's) has Artemis swearing her great oath to be forever a virgin huntress in the mountains. As a role model she must have looked decidedly attractive. Sappho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could, and did, turn out elegantly conventional wedding hymns (in addition to the surviving fragments, we have a detailed testimonial to her skill in this area by the fourth-century C.E. sophist Himerius of Prusa); but it is striking, and on reflection not surprising, how often one finds an ambiguous undertone to her pronouncements.

In two of the most famous fragments (one of them popularized by J. D. Salinger, who took a line from it, "raise high the roof-beams, carpenters," as the title for a book), Sappho mocks both the bridegroom and the doorkeeper at a country wedding, exaggerating the size of the first (he is as big as Ares—that's why the roof-beams need to be raised), and joking about the huge feet of the second. (Demetrius, who cites these passages in his treatise *On Style*, accuses her of "making cheap fun" of them, and in deliberately unpoetic language.) Her comments about men lack the enthusiasm of her tributes to girls, and sometimes they sound double-edged: when she compares the bridegroom to a slender sapling, her hearers, reared on Homer, would at once recall that this was how Odysseus described that delightful Scherian virgin Nausicaä. She is suspicious of male physical beauty (fragment 50). Her brush-off of a male suitor (fragment 121) with the excuse that she cannot tolerate being the older partner is particularly interesting, since the older partner is so evidently what she in fact was in all her liaisons with young girls.

But the biggest giveaway is also the best-known: her famous musing, adapted by Catullus, as she watches a man reacting to the company of a woman—perhaps his bride, but this is left open—while she herself reacts to, and is turned on by, the woman. Denys Page had some heavy-handed fun with the innocents who supposed this to be a wedding song. It is in fact a passionate subversion of public social norms, all the more intense for being hidden (the couple are clearly unaware of the speaker's feelings). The last surviving line, after the enumeration of the speaker's physical symptoms—the sweating, the pallor, the trembling, the failure of speech—concedes grimly, "But all must be endured, since." Since, surely, marriage closes the door on the magic world of adolescence; and too bad for those of us who cannot abandon those chrysalid enchantments in adult life, but must make do with a series of protégées who, all too quickly, pass from our guiding hands into another world.

"Towards you, my lovely ones, my attitude is unchangeable" (fragment 41). This was perhaps the truest line Sappho ever wrote; yet, as so often, her Greek remains ambiguous. In *Greek Lyric Poetry*, which appeared in 1993, Martin West, no mean Hellenist, translates it: "I cannot change my mind for you, my dears," and he might just be right. The text hinges on a dative case, and one of the first things you learn in Greek 101 is that the dative can indicate either *to* or *for*.

III.

On a fragment preserving the last few lines from Book I of Sappho's collected works (probably a Hellenistic recension rather than her own arrangement), the scribe noted: "1320 verses." One can almost hear the sigh of relief as he put down his pen. But consider. That means 330 stanzas, some sixty, perhaps even seventy, poems. There were eight further papyrus rolls of roughly similar length. We are looking at an oeuvre of some five hundred pieces, of which we have less than one percent. Yet even from the pitiful scraps that survive, we can sense not only the brilliance, but also the extraordinary intensity and variety animating even the smallest fragment. The urge to squeeze the last drop out of each one, whether by textual scrutiny, inspired emendation, or imaginative and ideological exegesis, is overwhelming.

Some even make a modernist virtue out of necessity. Pamela Gordon, in her introduction to Stanley Lombardo's translation, tells us "to read an individual fragment as though we were reading a note in a bottle." Lombardo himself takes this further by picking up a conceit of Page duBois in her study *Sappho Is Burning* (1995): the "notion of Sappho's poetry as a Lacanian 'body in pieces' and her shift of focus from reconstitution of classical lost wholes to our momentary and receding relationship to the shattered fragments of the past." Having so decided, he then picked out the seventy-three most substantial pieces, which, having translated, he "felt compelled to order and arrange . . . into a collection with some kind of esthetic coherence," thus adding his own creative overlay to that already imposed on Sappho by her Hellenistic editors. To put his personal stamp on the result, he then re-numbered all seventy-three items, but without providing a formal table of comparative numerations. You have to go to his "Notes on Ancient Sources" and hope for the best.

Anne Carson, by contrast, takes on all the fragments, in their generally accepted order, and writes: "In translating I tried to put down all that can be read of each poem in the plainest language I could find, using where possible the same order of words and thoughts as Sappho did. I like to think that, the more I stand out of the way, the more Sappho shows through." Coming from a poet and classicist of considerable repute, this disingenuous advocacy of the kind of pseudo-literalism so popular among first-year undergraduates is, to say the least, surprising. Carson's next sentence—"This is an amiable fantasy (transparency of self) within which most translators labor"—leads one to hope that she is really pulling our legs; but a perusal of her actual translations makes it all too clear that she means every word of it. The result, all too often, is a naïve and labored construal that, far from standing out of the way, blocks access to Sappho's elegance, sophistication, and euphony by making her sound like the unlettered hoydens whom she despised.

Here are some specimens. "Invisible too in Hades' house/you will go your way among dim shapes. Having been breathed out" (fragment 55). "And all the wrong he did before, loose it" (fragment 5). "In this place you Kypris taking up/in gold cups delicately/nectar mingled with festivities:/pour" (fragment 2). "In longing she bites her tender mind" (fragment 96). "Never more damaging O Eirana have I encountered you" (fragment 91). Sometimes the effect is compounded by erratic translation: the ghost in fragment 55 actually flutters off rather than being breathed out, and the woman in fragment 96, remembering Atthis, feeds on her thoughts rather than biting her mind, just as Dika in fragment 81 may surprise Carson's readers by binding her hair with crowns rather than garlands (*stephanois* can mean both). To be fair, Carson's abrupt and jagged technique can work effectively for disjunctive fragments, of which there are all too many, by producing the kind of collage reminiscent of Pound's famous "spring . . . / too long . . . / Gongyla" (also taken from a Sappho fragment), which so puzzled Robert Graves. Carson's mysterious title, *If Not, Winter*, is one such isolated scrap (from fragment 22): it has no context, it means nothing (if not *what?*) except what the modern reader cares to put there, but it certainly sticks in the mind.

Carson's *simpliste* translation is offset by an excruciatingly kitschy production device. Someone had the cute notion of printing the parallel Greek text in maroon rather than in black, which at once puts Sappho's poetry, by association, in the same category as the kind of greeting-card message that Evelyn Waugh's Agatha Runcible would have described as "too,

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too blush-making." Lombardo, too, provides embarrassment for the reader. His dedicatees are his sisters, Nancy and Shirley, "smiles playing about your immortal lips." One of them, at the age of ten or so, appears in an artily gussied-up photograph opposite fragment 49: "I loved you once, Atthis, long ago./You seemed like a child to me, little and graceless." Little and graceless? One can only hope that Nancy (or Shirley) was pleased.

But then one also reflects that this is a not-so-subtle way of trying by implication to leach the sex out of Sappho's famous, and ambiguous, relationship with Atthis, to see it as pure and sisterly affection. By Ovid's day, the modern distinction was already in place: his Sappho, in the *Heroides*, has advanced to heterosexual love, the homoerotic affairs that made her of ill repute (*infamem*) all forgotten. But archaic Lesbos was different. Sappho's passions were clear, and she was highly regarded in her community. (Being married, with a daughter, was probably essential, though.) It may all have been no more than the delirious, and innocent, adolescent buzz once so prevalent in girls' boarding schools (though I find this unlikely); but the buzz was there all right, and it was undeniably erotic. Keeping our unconscious assumptions out of our treatment of Sappho is an extraordinarily difficult business, even when sticking, as we should, to what the text actually tells us, since here we are up against the manifold nuances and ambiguities of the Greek language. How, then, do Carson and Lombardo manage on this score?

THE EDITING OF Sappho's *disiecta membra*, above all the papyrus fragments, has been a long and difficult process, to which many scholars—paleographers, historians, linguists, papyrologists, textual and literary critics—have contributed. Their cumulative labors are currently enshrined in three editions, between which the would-be serious translator must make a choice. First, there is Page and Lobel's *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta* (1955), together with Page's *Supplementum Lyricis Graecis* (1974), which includes a number of later papyrus finds. Second, there is Eva-Maria Voigt's *Sappho et Alcaeus: Fragmenta* (1971), which records in vast (and somewhat tedious) detail the readings and conjectures of earlier editors, and includes papyrus items missing from Page-Lobel, but picked up by Page in his *Supplementum*. Third, we have D.A. Campbell's *Greek Lyric I: Sappho and Alcaeus* (1982), which embodies all previous discoveries in an exemplary fashion, but has been undervalued by professionals simply because it appears in the Loeb series. Since Campbell's five-volume *Greek Lyric* replaces Edmonds's *Lyra Graeca*, he in fact deserves our heartfelt gratitude not only for a job well done, but also for giving a new generation of translators a firm base from which to work.

Lombardo, sensibly, plumps for Campbell, and except for intermittent flights of fancy, he does a reasonable job in consequence. Carson, on the other hand, goes for Voigt, and I wish I could resist the sneaking suspicion that her choice was dictated at least in part by the fact that Voigt is Sappho's only serious woman editor. The decision creates problems for her. To begin with, Voigt's highly specialized work, with its Latin *apparatus criticus*, was published by a scholarly press in Amsterdam, and it is hard to come by for anyone without access to a major university library. Worse, Voigt's Greek text, faithfully reproduced by Carson (though with the substitution throughout of terminal sigma for the median or semilunar version, a typographical anomaly that set this purist's teeth on edge), is totally free of supplements, these being relegated to her apparatus. Thus, since Carson freely raids the apparatus for conjectures but does not reproduce it, she is continually coming up with translations that lack confirmation in the Greek facing text. A nice case of this is her actual title, where the "if" of *If Not, Winter* is nowhere to be seen in Voigt's Greek, being in fact a conjecture by the German scholar Wilamowitz. All that fancy maroon Garamond Greek may be very decorative, but as a parallel text it lacks substance.

This is not nit-picking. In Sappho's much-disputed texts, the words, as T.S. Eliot and every translator know, "slip, slide, perish,/decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,/will not stay still." One letter can change a poem. A second-century C.E. grammarian cites the first line of the ode that Catullus imitated, but with a digamma instead of a mu at one crucial point: as a result the man sitting by the girl seems the gods' equal not to the speaker, but to himself. The very first word of the "Ode to Aphrodite" almost defies translation. Again, the reading depends on one variable letter. Did Sappho write *poikilothron'* or *poikilophron'* as her descriptive epithet of the goddess? Are we dealing with Aphrodite's throne or her mind, and in either case what are we to make of *poikilo-*, which dictionaries variously define as many-colored, embroidered, intricate, complex, changeful? (In modern Greek, *poikilia* is a mixed hors d'oeuvre.) This first hurdle for Sappho's translators is one that none of them, understandably, clears with complete success.

Carson, going rightly with the minority, argues in a sensible note that what is at issue throughout the poem is Aphrodite's foxy mental agility. She therefore goes for *-phron'* rather than *-thron'*, adding that probably the poet also intended her hearers' minds to skid to *-thron'* by association. Excellent. She then proceeds to ruin the effect by her translation: "Aphrodite of the spangled mind" sounds like a trapeze artist with intellectual pretensions. Lombardo abandons the Greek altogether, offering two vaguely emotional epithets ("shimmering, iridescent," as though the goddess was a dragonfly) for the price of one: whether he's going with *-thron'* or *-phron'* is anyone's guess. Earlier translators are all for *-thron'*: they offer us variously "throne of many hues" (Rayor), "rich-throned" (West), "ornate-throned" (Campbell), "enthroned in splendor" (Mulroy, Lattimore), "artfully adorned" (Powell), "dapple-throned" (Barnard), "caparisoned throne" (Roche, presumably seeing the throne as a horse). This fuzzy lack of focus seems, regrettably but perhaps unavoidably, endemic to English versions of a poet for whom sharp and sparkling ambiguities were the name of the game.

IT IS NOTEWORTHY that of all these translators only Lattimore and Powell show any respect for the haunting rhythms of Sappho's subtle and idiosyncratic lyric meters, surely the very heart, the musical core, of her poetry. Carson—who, for a poet, has an unexpectedly flat ear when it comes to rhythmic nuance—produces stanzas that read like chopped-up prose. Lombardo collapses the stanzas altogether into semi-cadenced free verse. Here is the final stanza of the Aphrodite ode in their renderings: "Come to me now: loose me from hard/care and all my heart longs/to accomplish, accomplish. You/be my ally." (Carson). "Come to me again now, release me/from my agony, fulfill all/that my heart desires, and fight for me,/fight at my side, Goddess." (Lombardo). Carson cuts two key words, Lombardo pads (no "Goddess" in the Greek, and she's just to be an ally); neither gives any idea of the hypnotic Sapphic meter. Has neither of them ever read Swinburne?

Lattimore and Powell, by contrast, in their efforts to catch the meter, feel obliged to both paraphrase and expand Sappho's Greek. Lattimore's version runs: "In such guise come even again and set me/free from doubt and sorrow; accomplish all those/things my heart desires to be done; appear and/stand at my shoulder." Powell

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also pads, though not so much, and fluffs the rhythm of the first line: "Come to me again, and release me from this/want past bearing. All that my heart desires to/happen—make it happen. And stand beside me,/goddess, my ally." Is it really so impossible to produce an English version that both sticks to the Greek and reproduces its metrical pattern and stresses? Consider this: "Come to me now as then, grant me release from/burdensome worries: all that my heart most yearns for/bring to fulfillment, and yourself beside me/stand as an ally."

We often hear that, owing to the vagaries of postwar educational theory, a generation has grown up almost wholly ignorant of formal meter and rhythm. The prosaic trickle down the center of the page that defines the work of so many contemporary poets would seem to confirm this. So, alas, too often do the current English translations of Sappho and other ancient poets. Lombardo's versions, says his publisher, "give us a virtuoso embodiment of Sappho's voice," but the voice remains contemporary, and Lombardo's. Carson's translation, claims her mischievous blurb, "illuminates Sappho's reflections on love, desire, marriage, exile, cushions, bees, old age, shame, time, chickpeas and many other aspects of the human situation." Well, so it does, just as Dave Barry's column does; but somewhere the essence of the poetry gets lost. The field remains wide open. ■

Things Past

By EUGEN WEBER

Trains of Thought: Memories of a Stateless Youth by Victor Brombert

(W.W. Norton, 334 pp., $25.95)

DO NOT LET yourself be fooled by the short list of "Other Books by Victor Brombert" preceding the title page of his latest. Our memoirist's name has graced thirty-odd volumes since the 1940s, which suggests that those he cites must be only those that are closest to his heart; and there the names of Flaubert and Stendhal stand out. The obsessive misanthrope of Croisset cannot tell us much about the Yale and Princeton scholar. But Stendhal can. Prolific, ironic, lucid, passionate yet detached, he was Brombert's "early literary love," as, early and late, he continues to be for many worldly lovers of the word. Reader, writer, lover, soldier, tourist, tireless pedestrian, the *promeneur solitaire* shares inclinations, sympathies, reveries with Brombert, whom he has taught the beauties of reminiscing and "the fertile tensions between living and telling."

There is a lot of living and telling in *Trains of Thought*. The title refers to the author's fascination with trains, but also with cogitation, speculation, meditation. There is much vehicular movement of all sorts, and many strolls in the manner of Stendhal through Paris, Nice, Seville, Manhattan, and places in between; and memories abound. Few names are dropped (Nabokov once gave tennis lessons to a cousin), many names are recalled: hotels, Métro stations, streets, friends, an amicable prostitute, the Polish tailor near the place de la République who always cut the teenager's jackets with armholes and waists too tight, and Dr. Pavlov, the dentist in Montparnasse who clung obdurately to the techniques that he had learned in Moscow before 1917.

Our author, bless him, remembers the wonderful pastry shop called Coquelin, on the rue de Passy, now gone; and Pam-Pam (from *pamplemousse*, or grapefruit), the bar-restaurant founded in the 1930s to offer exotic fruit-juice drinks unthreatening to young people. Beyond the petits fours of yesteryear, there is also an archeology of love affairs, a geology of social relations, a geography of urban explorations, an ethnology of holiday friendships, a philosophy of emotional contexts. And there is some showing, too, in snapshot illustrations evocative of a gone-by world.

Son of a vaguely defined father who prospered in the wholesale and export business, and of a sharply etched mother hipped on cultural activities who played championship bridge and dragged her reluctant son through museums, the youth never lacked for money. Born in France in 1923, Brombert seems to have been nine years old (dates are in short supply here) when the family, Russian in origin, settled in Paris after some wandering. School (a posh *lycée*) furnished sarcastically threatening teachers but also friends. The annual routine included holidays at the seaside, at spas such as Karlsbad and Marienbad, or in the mountains for winter sports (though the parents neither skied nor sported); and visits to the Racing Club de France, "my tennis club in the Bois de Boulogne," where "Jews and anti-Semites played together."

Although aware of ambient anti-Semitism, "more latent animosity than outright discrimination," of bileful mutterings about *sales juifs* who crowded in from Central and Eastern Europe, of angry imprecations against the socialist premier Léon Blum, a horrid Jew and an intellectual, the Bromberts felt themselves more *israélites* than *juifs*; and they were seemingly never short of the cash that smoothed what Brombert Senior euphemized as "accommodations." A good job too, since without the bribes that he lavished we might not have this elegantly reflective book, or many excellent other books.

IT IS NOT clear that politics loomed larger in young Brombert's life than they did in that of a self-centered society trapped between escapism and rage, its mood reflected in what Brombert calls a Maginot line of deceptive optimism, its irony by the exemplary and omnipresent *Tout va trés bien, madame la marquise*, "All's copacetic, madame la marquise," a hit song of 1935 in which milady's butler reports a string of catastrophes, each one ending in the soothing phrase. Emblematic of the fraught 1930s, these ironic lyrics applied even better to the wartime years. The lad had better things on his mind than politics: girls (a lasting bent), books (never leave home without one), and, soon, writing. Musset, who provided inspiration (and more) for love letters and love poems, leads Brombert to rescue plagiarism from indiscriminate obloquy. He is quite right, of course, as Lautréamont knew, as Giraudoux testified, as Enid Starkie observed about Rimbaud, as all the painters and all teenagers learn, who learn by imitating. He is also too discreet to recall that Musset of all

EUGEN WEBER is the author of, among other books, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s*.

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people declared war on copycats:

> *Je hais comme la mort l'état de Plagiaire;*
> *Mon verre n'est pas grand, mais je bois*
> *dans mon verre.*
>
> I can't abide the plagiarist, he is an evil clown;
> My glass is not too big, but I'm drinking from my own.

Immortal if you like, untranslatable if you expect a rhyme, Musset continues to supply a convenient crib for those who are young and in love, as Brombert was. (Myself, I always preferred Dorothy Parker.)

GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS, and literature aside, Brombert's book is a social historian's trove. Item: in the 1930s, Brombert's mother could not open her own bank account without her husband's authorization (neither could my wife in the late 1950s). Item: during the phony war, in 1939–1940, so many Paris families settled in Deauville that the *lycée* in nearby Caen opened a branch in a large hotel in the dormant seaside resort. Item: when the Germans burst into France in the spring of 1940, the Bromberts left for Bordeaux by train, thus avoiding the chaos of roads congested by millions of refugees. Soon after the family got away the trains stopped running, the postal system folded, banks closed, food supplies ebbed, smaller towns were deprived of water, gas, electricity for weeks.

The Bromberts ended up in Nice, and while the father strove to winkle visas and tickets for them to leave the country, the seventeen-year-old son describes the "vacation mood" that reigned on the sunny coast: evil mosquitoes, but also books and ping-pong, flirts, bike rides and walks, friends and stifled velleities of Resistance. Dates again are absent, but the father's efforts paid off. The family left France for Spain, thence on a "floating concentration camp" banana boat for the United States.

That would be 1941: not long to wait before Pearl Harbor brought the awaited chance to join the army. Meanwhile there was America to discover. The surprising width of cars and taxis where three could sit side by side in comfort evokes no comment. The new arrival is struck by Kellogg's Corn Flakes and lashings of cold milk, milk shakes and Coca-Cola, toilets in the bathroom (not, as in France, in a space apart), the paucity of handshakes, the plethora of first names, indiscreet questionings about origins, income, and other matters that Europeans prefer to leave unprobed. A brief spell at the Harrisburg Academy of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania revealed approachable teachers, dorms with showers, a gym with a swimming pool.

Induction and Fort Dix followed. Again, the unexpected: GIs in his barracks showered every day, sometimes twice a day. "That amazed me. I kept thinking of the offensive smell of feet in the Paris classroom." Brombert is talking about an elite *lycée*. He does not mention the stink of uncleaned, unaired, unwashed clothes in the Métro, theater, and cinema that persisted well after the war. But the section on wartime service comes to life even more than the rest of the book. Narrative flows free, unburdened by digressions: proof that he enjoyed much of it. D-Day, "incongruously festive" with hundreds of boats, landing craft, and bobbing barrage balloons; Normandy, the post-liberation resentment of the locals, the fake resister cadging cigarettes, the epidemic of denunciations (also noted by German occupants), the speech that Master-Sergeant Brombert delivered in liberated Paris, perched on the hood of his jeep the day after de Gaulle walked down the Champs-Elysées; that last winter of fear and fighting in the Hürtgen forest and in the Ardennes. Attentive readers may have registered that Brombert had by then reached the advanced age of twenty-one. They may or may not reflect how young we all were then, and that war can be fun when you are callow and immoral. De-Nazification follows in occupied Germany, where desks and red tape have come back into their own, where Brombert and his unit made arrests while their commanders released and employed the "able Germans" needed to maintain order, restore public utilities, and keep the streets clean. "De-Nazification turned out to be a joke."

That, curiously for a man whose distinction is intellectual and academic, is where the book peters out in a few pages. Brombert returns to the States, becomes a student at Yale, then a teacher and a distinguished one like his master Henri Peyre. He has learned that teaching is not about factual knowledge, let alone about inculcating ready-made opinions: it is meant "to provoke, incite, perplex, even disturb one's students, and to encourage them, not to imitate and repeat, but to discover their own voices." What he says about teaching is worth saying, and I have quoted it in full. The rest remains unsaid or awaits a second volume. Meanwhile I will admire the man who is not embarrassed to refuse the use of a word processor. He can say, with Stendhal, *visse, scrisse, amo*; I lived, I wrote, I loved. ■

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PARIS DIARIST

World War

YOU'LL FIND THE SAME VIEW of the roots of Al Qaeda in *The Weekly Standard* and on the editorial pages of *The New York Times*: The group draws its energy and its recruits from the unresolved conflicts in the Middle East. "[A]ll the Arab-Muslim states that are failing at modernity ... have become an engine for producing undeterrables," wrote the *Times*' Tom Friedman on September 18. Democratize Iraq, reform the Saudi autocracy, and/or bring peace to Israel and the Palestinians, and Al Qaeda will go away. But Olivier Roy, France's leading expert on Islam and Central Asia, sees Islamic radicalism rather differently. He considers Al Qaeda as much a product of the Occident as of the Orient and as much a product of a bastardized left-wing anti-imperialism as of contemporary Islam.

I HAD BREAKFAST WITH ROY, DIRECTOR of research at the Centre Nationale des Recherche Scientifique, France's huge publicly funded research organization, in Paris on September 11, 2002. I sought him out because I admired his earlier works and needed his help deciphering (with my wobbly French) his two recently published works, *The Illusions of September 11* and *The Globalization of Islam*. After one week in Paris, I was also desperate to talk to a critic of the Bush administration's foreign policy who doesn't believe it is being run by the American Petroleum Institute.

ROY IS A SHORT, BALDING, AND UNassuming man who first visited Central Asia in 1969 as a 19-year-old. In Afghanistan in the 1980s, while researching a book on the mujahedin, he met the men who would later be drawn to the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Even then they struck Roy, who himself had been a fair-weather Maoist, as distant relations of the European students who had waved the Little Red Book and erected street barricades in the late '60s. Osama bin Laden's group, as Roy would subsequently argue, was not simply a product of Islamic fundamentalism; its Islam was theologically unorthodox and politicized. Bin Laden and his followers elevated violent *jihad*, which is not one of the five pillars of Islam, to a permanent and individual duty. (Even fundamentalists in Saudi Arabia don't take it that far.) They also fused radical Islam with a global revolutionary, anti-Western perspective that echoed the anti-imperialism of the older Arab and European new left and even today's anti-globalization movement.

THE TERROR TACTICS ON WHICH Al Qaeda relies—among them airplane hijacking and suicide attacks—date from the Japanese Red Army, the Red Army Faction in Germany, and the secular Palestinian left of the early '70s. So does its underlying worldview. Like the anti-imperialist new left, Al Qaeda envisages revolution globally, with the United States as the principal adversary. Unlike these secular movements, however, the goal of bin Laden and his followers is to create a new radical-Islamic international community, or *umma*. Al Qaeda, Roy writes in *The Illusions*, is "a junction of a radicalized Islam with a shrill anti-imperialism reshaped by globalization."

MOST OF AL QAEDA'S INITIAL "NOmadic Jihadists," as Roy calls them, were Arabs who had come to Afghanistan in the '80s from Saudi Arabia and from countries such as Egypt and Algeria, where Islamic nationalist movements had failed to take power. By the mid-90s, though, many of Al Qaeda's recruits hailed from the suburbs of London, Paris, Marseilles, and New York. Most of these men had emigrated from the Middle East or North Africa to Europe and the United States in the prior decades. (A few, like Richard Reid or Zacarias Moussaoui, were actually born in the West.) Some of these Al Qaeda recruits were middle-class college graduates, like Moussaoui; others, like Reid, were lumpen proletarians. What bound them together, according to Roy, was that they all suffered from the anomie of globalization. As with other educated Arab émigrés, Moussaoui failed to find work as a professional; Reid ended up in jail. And all of them had difficulty adapting to Europe's secular culture. They looked to the teachings of radical mosques and later to Al Qaeda as a means of finding themselves. Writes Roy in *Islam and Globalization*, "Islam is for them the occasion to redefine their identity and to voice a protest—both through the construction of a local Islamic space and through participation in the imaginary *umma* of an international network."

GIVEN THIS UNDERSTANDING, ROY REjects the widespread American view that Al Qaeda's terrorist networks could be eliminated by removing the main sources of conflict in the Middle East. Al Qaeda, Roy notes, has had only the vaguest relationship to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to Iraq. None of its cadres during the '90s came from the occupied territories or fought for Iraq in the Gulf war. (In fact, bin Laden offered to fight for Saudi Arabia *against* Saddam Hussein until Riyadh turned to the U.S. for help.) Al Qaeda has become a global rather than merely a regional phenomenon, and its converts are as inspired by their failure to integrate themselves into the West as by Israel's continuing occupation of the West Bank.

ROY ALSO GIVES LITTLE CREDENCE TO the view—still remarkably common among European intellectuals—that the United States could have pacified the Taliban and Al Qaeda through negotiations. He distinguishes groups like the IRA and the PLO, which use terror but have concrete aims that are subject to negotiation, from groups like Al Qaeda that have global, apocalyptic aims. He thinks the United States was entirely warranted in eliminating Al Qaeda's base of operations in Afghanistan.

BUT ROY IS CRITICAL OF THE AMERICAN motif of a continuing *war* against terror, particularly because the word suggests that the battle can be won or lost over a defined period. What remains since the war in Afghanistan, he says, are loose networks of sectarian activists. As American and German authorities have ruefully discovered, some of these activists may have only the most tangential relationship to bin Laden himself. They need to be watched closely and, if necessary, rounded up and put in jail. But, Roy insists, the roots of radical Islam in the West need to be addressed by integrating Muslim and Arab émigrés into Western society—particularly in secular Europe—where Muslim groups face considerable economic and social obstacles. Unless this happens, the networks inspired or created by Al Qaeda will persist no matter what the U.S. does militarily.

EVEN WITH BETTER ASSIMILATION, Roy believes complete success is unlikely anytime soon. "We will have terrorism for another decade or more," Roy concludes as we get ready to leave the café. "It's a generational movement." That's hardly a reassuring thought, but it's one that fits the facts better than most of the views about Al Qaeda being tossed about in Washington. Maybe some American pundits should get out their French dictionaries.

JOHN B. JUDIS

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